To say that tastes differ, that one man's meat is another man's poison, that beauty is in the eye of the beholder (or to murmur indifferently, De Gustibus"), is to repeat old platitudes: but recognizing as much does not, of itself, erase or smooth over diversity which is more than a matter of words. One can acknowledge the existence of contrary opinions without either sharing them or even having more than superficial acquaintance with their content.

Certainly this has been so where the Australian Aborigines are concerned, from the point of view of most Europeans who came into contact with them while their traditional culture was still largely unaffected by pressures from outside it. Now, at a time when that traditional culture has gone from most parts of the Continent, other Australians are becoming more interested in learning something about it, or more ready to pay attention, without contempt or patronage, to ideas, beliefs, modes of thought and behaviour, which in many respects differ profoundly from their own.

This is in sharp contrast to an approach which is still well entrenched here and there, although less conscious than a few years ago and therefore easily glossed over by people anxious to ignore or forget it—the view that the Aborigines are not only hopelessly incompetent (except perhaps for stock work, or domestic duties, or unskilled labour), but also inherently boorish and crude: a view which might be summarized, in polite paraphrase, as 'manners beastly, customs vile'. The converse extreme is, of course, an uncritical acceptance of things Aboriginal (or quasi-Aboriginal), to such a degree that almost any pronouncement, or verse, or painting, from such a source draws an enthusiastic response. But in between the two lies the middle way of trying, sincerely, to understand what traditional Aboriginal culture was like; and this is a task made all the more difficult because those elements which are, so to speak, marked 'for export' must inevitably be little more than fragments seen out of context.

It may be true that idiomatic expressions represent the last and the hardest part of learning a language, and that symbolic allusions can be successfully grasped only after more prosaic aspects have been mastered. It may be true, also, that there are enough pan-human similarities to ensure that communication is possible even across cultural boundaries: that in the sphere of art and aesthetics, at least, reactions of pleasure or sympathy or emotional satisfaction need not rest on detailed explanations of content. Much depends here on circumstances and intention. How far is it necessary, or desirable, or possible, to read a document in its original tongue? And how much 'translation' is needed when a whole world of feelings and ideas must be conveyed in miniature, without pedantry or footnotes?

I do not propose to take up these questions, but because they have a direct bearing on the topic of this paper they should be kept in mind.

THE Aborigines could be described as a hard-working, realistic people, caught up in an almost unending struggle for subsistence. In their world, minute observation of their natural surroundings was not a hobby, or a diverting means of relaxation. They could not neglect any source of water or food. Even if they did not need these urgently at the time, the moment of need would probably come later, and the record must be available—unwritten, but nonetheless effective among a people whose survival often depended on the accuracy of their memories and the efficacy of their transmission. Their religious beliefs and rites too had, essentially, this pragmatic slant.

Notwithstanding the limits imposed on them by their environment and by their material equipment for dealing with it, however, this description is incomplete—because for them, as for most human beings, the basic necessities of living were not to be framed only in material terms. Even in the harshest areas, in the harshest seasons, something more was involved—and not merely humour and joking of a more or less conventionalized kind, or affection between persons over and above the formal demands of their relationship. Aesthetic expression and dramatic vitality found greatest scope, perhaps, in the sphere of sacred ritual, sacred art, and sacred song; but even in
ceremonies held simply for pleasure the same qualities are evident. Individual 'creativity' was not emphasized in Aboriginal society: there was some provision for it, although not a great deal. But songs, dramatic performances, painting and carving, body decorations, dancing, need be no less pleasing for being cast in a traditional mould. Associations with the land, natural phenomena, physical survival and spiritual continuity, and relations among human beings: these provided the basic framework upon which each group built up its particular patterns, enmeshing with others in such a way that all through the Continent there are both divergences and uniformities of a far from fortuitous kind.

Throughout much of Australia, however, apart from rock drawings and engravings, the greater part of the Aborigines' efforts in this direction has not been accessible to outsiders. Ritual and singing, body painting and ground drawings, recounting of myths and tales, are ephemeral and transient when no mechanical instruments are present to record them for the benefit of people in other times and places. Nor, on the whole, are objects, artifacts, material representations, so rich and numerous elsewhere—or, perhaps, so close (relatively speaking) to European tastes—as they are in Arnhem Land.

It is not for such reasons that Arnhem Land is the centre of attention in this paper. Other regions could serve just as well. Apart from the song versions of sacred myths, the art of story telling represents in many cases a dramatic ritual in itself. Ceremonial paraphernalia and body decorations are as colourful and varied throughout central Australia, for instance, as one could find anywhere: the dancing as exhilarating, the ritual miming as unobtrusively polished. No-one acquainted with T. G. H. Strehlow's translations of Aranda sacred songs could doubt their intrinsic beauty, corresponding, in balance of form and quality of content, to the symmetrical blending of line and colour in the sacred ground designs. But even in ordinary camp songs, or semi-sacred magical singing, there is the same happy combination of word-image, music or rhythm, and (often) dramatic expression.

Thus, to take a brief example, a rain-sequence localized at Kaningara Well on the Canning Stock Route draws on familiar sights and sounds, but in so doing becomes more than a perfunctory formula for inducing rain to replenish the rockholes and soaks. The word-pictures in each short song are cumulative, leading up to the hoped-for result: clouds of varying shapes and sizes appear on the horizon, rising massively; the earth below them grows warmer and more humid; a little bird, associated with water and waterholes, hops about expectantly; lightning plays in the sky, and a strong wind breaks branches from the trees; the first rain drops patter lightly on the ground; at last, as the clouds stand directly overhead, rain pours down with the heavy sound of thunder, while water, trickling at first, goes running in all directions: streams flowing, rockholes filling; even the smallest soaks are renewed and revived.

In turning to Arnhem Land, then, it is well to remember that this is not a special case: that essentially, even in regard to subject matter, and undoubtedly in regard to overall orientation, much of what is said in respect of that area could serve as a firm basis for discussion of others.

Western Arnhem Land.

Non-sacred ceremony has none of the high seriousness and intensity of purpose which characterize secret-sacred ritual—although the distinction between them is often, in practice, more blurred than this might suggest. But whether the occasion has been planned beforehand, perhaps as a setting for inter-tribal trade, or came about merely because one or two people happened to feel like it, there is a light-heartedness about such gatherings which the Gunwinggu artist Midjaumidjau has captured very well in his painting, on bark, of such a ceremonial scene (Plate 1). The songman, seated in the left hand corner, claps his sticks rhythmically as he sings; opposite him the didgeridoo player provides a sonorous accompaniment; on the left, two men are dancing; on the right, a woman moves gracefully without stirring from the spot, making the conventional string figures ('catscradles') appropriate to that particular song.

Midjaumidjau himself has a reputation as a songman, as well as a painter. Apart from his active role in sacred ritual, he 'owns' a series of songs which his spirit-familars bring to him in dreams. Although his own part in their composition is not made explicit, they provide an opportunity for self-expression to a far greater extent than do the more formal sacred songs with their stress on adherence to traditional prescriptions. If, however, the songman's position is a relatively specialized one, in this situation, that does not mean that there is a sharp line between performers and audience, or spectators. Some men and women are acknowledged to be better dancers than others, just as some are better artists or craftsmen, or better singers: a few claim to be poor singers (and their performance, when pressed, usually confirms this). But in these open camp ceremonies any adult can join in the dancing: any children, too, provided they are interested enough, and have practised enough in their own play groups to ensure that they do not spoil the per-
formance. (Until a few years ago Gunwinggu children had their own set of traditional songs, with dance-steps to match, mostly relating to the natural world around them: to animals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, plants, wind, rain and clouds.) And anyone who wants can learn the songs, and repeat and explain them if asked to do so—although husbands discourage their wives from displaying too much eagerness to learn the 'sweetheart songs'.

In songs and dancing of this non-sacred type, commonplace topics and events are presented in such a way that they become something more. The simplicity of the songs, of the steps, and of the subject matter, is deceptive. This is so in the realm of painting as well. The freshwater tortoises shown in Plate 2 are, on the surface, no more than that—simply tortoises. But the artist, Nipper Maragar, one of the few surviving members of the Mangeri tribe, was not content with indicating a few rough shapes—even though for increase purposes a symbolic representation is often thought to be as effective as a more 'realistic' one. Instead, he has included just enough figures to fit nicely on to his bark sheet without crowding (a local preference, in bark painting), and arranged them in a pleasing pattern. Looking at this bark, we can identify the subject without knowing the local names for fresh-water tortoises; nor need we know anything about local mythology to appreciate line and form in the painting. Similarly, in another bark from the same artist (Plate 3) it is possible to make a straightforward interpretation of 'man spearing fish', without any help from the Aboriginal environment. This is direct communication between artist and viewer, but it is communication at a very superficial level indeed. Even if all that concerns us is what the artist as a person was trying to say, we need to know something more about local views and local conventions in regard to his subject matter: and this leads, us, inescapably, into the field of mythology.

In this as in other regions, the whole territory is divided up among local groups which hold it in trust, inalienably, on the basis of unwritten titles framed in mythological terms. Virtually every prominent landmark or water has its mythological associations: and across and between them goes a maze of tracks, commemorating the journeys of various characters in the pre-human era. The major figures of western Arnhem Land are credited with responsibility for instituting sacred rituals; but usually a little below them in importance are hundreds of minor characters, djang, the spirits and guardians of the majority of local sites. Many of these were in human form to begin with, and only later assumed various other shapes, or turned into the multitude of odd rock-formations, east of the East Alligator River, which the stories help to 'explain'. Stories about djang are not all ascribed to the same point in time. Nor is there any restricting rule of 'one character, one story'. Different local traditions, within and between language groups or tribes, may be partly responsible for this; but in any case it is easily accounted for in terms of various manifestations of one main character, or a close relative, or emphasis on different episodes in one basic story.

Barramundi is an example, on both scores. At Bobongi in Gunader, in eastern Gunwinggu territory, he is said to have been present from the very beginning of time—unlike most other djang, whose stories begin in one place and end in another; and because of this he was in a position to insist that Leech, who came along afterward and wanted to settle there, should move a little distance away and find his own small site. In another version—or another manifestation—Barramundi came from far in the east beyond the Liverpool River, already in the form of a fish, following the streams until at length, stranded inland in shallow water, he turned into stone. Two further variants tell how he made the East Alligator River, in country where incoming Gunwinggu have filled the gap left by various tribes which are now almost wholly extinct. In one version (Plate 3), a hunter speared him in his home at the headwaters of the River, and in his headlong flight to the sea he created the River as it is now: finally, at its mouth, he turned into a rock visible at low water today. The second of these versions reaches the same conclusion through a different sequence. Here, in human shape but acknowledging his Barramundi destiny, he came from the south west, following the waters and looking for an appropriate place to transform himself. He tried (literally, 'felt' or 'listened to') one place after another, all named in the story, but rejected each in turn. In one there was a big stretch of sand, and the water was too shallow; in another the water was deep, but 'he didn't like it'; in others there was too much mud, or too many weeds. On his journey to the coast he passed the rocky djang site where two Wild Turkey brothers had been swallowed by the Rainbow Snake (a monsoon and flood symbol), who in yet another story had herself made the East Alligator River as she rushed inland, in a swirl of salt water, in search of her victims. This last Barramundi version has a parallel in one of the myths about Long-necked Tortoise. Coming from the west, from the direction of the Adelaide River, she too tried to assume her fated shape, investigating one water and then another until, at the end of a busy journey, she found the place she was seeking.
Some *djung* sites are ‘dangerous’, hedged about with taboos; but even when they are not, damage to one of them is expected to bring further disaster. In the long accounts of the travels of the First People, often packed with seemingly trivial detail, and occasionally little more than lists of their doings at various places, the misfortune which led to their metamorphosis as *djung* provides a (or, the) dramatic climax. Sometimes they cook a goanna or a possum in a sandy place near the water, not realizing that the Rainbow will hear if it sizzles on the fire. Or a motherless child cries, refusing all efforts to comfort or quieten it, because it has been teased, or misses its mother, or wants something it cannot have—a basket of wild honey set aside as taboo, or even the identical yams which it has just eaten: nothing else will do. A man or woman weeps in grief, recalling parents or brother or sister left behind, or dead, or already turned into *djung*. A party of *njalaadj* dancers, noisily engaged in their ceremony as the drone-pipe sounds, the sticks clap, a girl calls from the top of a tall tree, and (for good measure) a motherless child wails incessantly, do not realize their peril until they feel the ground growing soft beneath their dancing feet. People cut down a palm tree, or accidentally knock against a stone, unaware at first that they have broken a taboo. Or someone in a fury of rage, vowing vengeance on a whole camp despite the fact that he himself must perish with it, smashes a *djung* rock—especially, a rock commemorating the Rainbow herself.

Whatever the provocation, and the details of what follows, the outcome is almost invariably the same. A great wind comes blowing, the sky darkens, thunder roars, and the earth shakes, as water comes rising to submerge the ground, the camp, and everything and everyone in it. In all but a few cases the Rainbow ‘swallows’ her victims, drowning them; and presently she vomits their bones, which turn into stone.

Occasionally she is thwarted.

Old Nabiridauda came from far inland, travelling northward, carrying long baskets full of wild honey and various stringybark flowers and seeds, and thinking to himself, ‘I’ll go straight on until I come into Gunwinggu country’. He slept on the way, and early each morning set off again, pouring out seeds, so that trees grew up, and flowers, and wild bees to make honey from them. All the way, through rocky country, he poured out his flowers. The rocks were very rough, he couldn’t get down: but at last he came down to soft ground and followed a track between high rocky cliffs . . . Presently he came to a pool, where a black-skinned barramundi had turned into *djung*. It was a dangerous place, nobody was allowed to spear fish there; but he didn’t know . . . When he heard the Rainbow coming he became hard, turning into stone. She tried to eat him, but they just went hard together, he, and all the things he was carrying. And he stands there today, outside his cave, with one hand at his forehead shading his eyes, looking for bees, while just inside the cave lies the Rainbow, turned into stone. . . .

Not all stories, even *djung* stories, conform with this pattern. Several follow it up to a point, like the tale of two young men who went looking for fish and crabs on the coast at low tide, and were trapped by the feet in a large clam.

. . . They tried to move, tried to open the shell with their hands, tried to free themselves to get back to the shore. No, they could not. The sea came closer. They wept, thinking of their mother and father. As salt water spread around them they broke their spears and spearthrowers into pieces and let them drift on the tide: ‘Go up on to the beach! Then they will come and see you, and look for us: but by then the sea will have swallowed us completely.’ The sea came closer: they embraced each other. Now the tide came up to their throats: it covered them . . . and they turned into stone there . . .

In other stories people have encounters with spirits—and sometimes, in consequence, are suffocated or burnt to death in the caves; or they work sorcery on one another, or quarrel; a girl refuses to go to the husband her parents have chosen for her, preferring her young sweetheart, and he punishes her for rejecting him. A few of the story characters are so sensitive that the least noise distresses them and keeps them from sleeping; two tree-grub *djung* people left the place where they had planned to camp for a long time, because the water snails murmured too loudly: ‘Let’s go further on,’ they told each other, ‘where there are no creatures to disturb us.’ And in one poignant story a woman’s husband, who had been diving for long-nosed crocodiles, is torn to pieces before her eyes. (The crocodile had been reconciled to its fate, but ‘when it reached the surface of the water and saw the sun, it didn’t want to die’; it turned on its captor, and destroyed him instead.)

Whatever the topic, however, it is treated in the ordinary language of everyday. The stories achieve their effect through unspectacular prose, given life and intensity by the tones and gestures of the speaker. Nothing extra is really needed.
But the Gunwinggu are not as literally minded as they sometimes seem. Apart from having three interrelated sets of kinship terms in ordinary use, they have a preference for circumlocution in certain circumstances (the Rainbow is often 'that creature'); geese and ducks are, often, 'winged meats'; a newly dead person is 'he who is far away'; the belly of a corpse is a 'palm-leaf basket'), and for figurative expressions: to 'turn one's hand' is to deceive; to 'burn' a person with words, or speak to him 'with a hard mouth', is to scold him. And so on. Also, in addition to having an interrogative particle (which, conveniently, indicates a question to follow), Gunwinggu includes an assortment of words expressing hesitancy or doubt; and this perspective is reflected in the stories. The characters ask themselves, or each other, 'Where shall we go?' 'What shall we do?' or (as a rule rhetorically), 'What is the name of this place?' They brood about their own feelings, change their minds (Barramundi remained in one place for some time before coming to the conclusion that it wouldn't suit), lose their way, make mistakes; one of the alternative words for 'becoming djang' is translated as 'going wrong' or 'making oneself wrong'. But underlying all this hesitancy is a more persistent sense of purpose and destiny, which the stories make equally clear.

The dramatic impact which the Gunwinggu and their neighbours achieve in the sphere of myth and song, and in their art and ritual as well, comes through the way in which they handle everyday words and everyday things—or, conversely, through the 'ordinary' way in which they handle the extraordinary and fantastic.

Eastern Arnhem Land.

Eastward from the Crocodile Islands to Yirrkalla and Cape Arnhem is a network of related dialects (mada, 'tongue') quite unlike Gunwinggu both in structure and in vocabulary. This is only one of many contrasts between them. But there are similarities too, and some continuity, particularly in the sphere of sacred ritual and, to a lesser extent, of myth. One instance of such a partial overlap is the Wawalag (Wauwalak) sequence, illustrated in Plates 4 and 5.

Several versions of the Wawalag myth and the rites associated with it are relatively well known, if only through W. L. Werner's A Black Civilisation and R. M. Berndt's Kunapipi. The two Sisters' journey from somewhere far inland, carrying long baskets of stone spear blades; the birth of the elder girl's child; the arousing of the great Python, emerging from his sacred waterhole with rain and wind, lightning and thunder; the Sisters' desperate ritual dancing, inside their small bark hut, to keep him at bay; his final coiling around the hut, swallowing them one by one, to vomit and then swallow them again: this bald sketch of some of the main incidents is surrounded with a wealth of detail and symbolism. Much of it recalls the symbolism of the Rainbow Snake further west: but here it is more intricate, one 'explanation' leading to another concealed within or behind it. There is a parallel in the bark drawings. In Western Arnhem Land the Rainbow is a free-standing figure, not hard to recognize. Here (Plate 4) the realistic snake figure is almost hidden in the careful filling-in of conventionalized motifs, in characteristic eastern Arnhem Land style.

It is the same with most of the mythology of this eastern side, which apart from the Wawalag and a few other cycles is told more often through the medium of song—and those, too, have their song versions. There are exceptions. In the Milingimbi-Arnhem Bay area, particularly, the category of stories designed primarily for entertainment includes some strikingly dramatic examples: dramatic tales in which suspense, grief, humour, are delineated with a fine sensitivity to plot-sequence and situational effect (but, as in the west, much less attention to character). A competent story teller can make his (or her) recital an event to be long remembered by his audience, a vivid 'theatrical' presentation designed for the eye almost as much as for the ear.

In the song cycles, however, the approach is quite different, and not only because they are in song instead of narrative form.

The linguistic units and clans, all named, and divided between two patrilineal moieties (whereas the western Arnhem Land moieties are matrilineal), have their own traditional versions of various cycles, and their own distinctive tunes; and the majority of personal names (of which everyone has at least two or three) come directly from the songs, or the place names they incorporate. In all of these songs the action proceeds slowly, and plot development is minimal. The principal concern is the building up of a complex of images, through a host of 'singing words' pointing to various attributes of the quasi-human or spirit creatures, natural elements, and inanimate objects with which they deal. To be included in a song is to 'have a name'—to be certified as having some importance, however small, in the local scheme of things.

There are 'outside' versions of all the main cycles and myths, either sung in the open camp as men clap the sticks and blow the didgeridoo, while women dance in the stylized fashion traditionally laid down for each song; or chanted by women wailing in grief or joy. 'Inside' versions, secret-sacred, with more complex symbolism, are
known only to fully initiated men. There are also children's 'play' versions, simplified accounts in narrative style with only a scattering of 'singing words'.

A song cycle which has a number of features in common with the western Arnhem Land story of Nabiridauda (the bee-djang man) reveals something of the divergence in treatment between the two cultural traditions: but the short extract set out here is drastically condensed. The essence of the original lies in 'repetition which is not repetition': lingering, in different words, on the same image—or slightly different images, because viewed from slightly different angles. Here this quasi-repetition is omitted, as calling for too involved a discussion; except for the names of the main character, only the bare sequence is retained.

He came from far inland, from the country of the Rainbarnga (Rembarnga) people, the Wawalag people, the Ngalagan people (places named). Wudal, Worial, Maiamaia, Laglag, Binambungu, Maralabwingua, Maiaridiridir—with boomerang legs, covered all over with tufts of wild cotton or white feather down; leaves, like bracelets, on his arms and legs, and across his forehead a band of kangaroo claws. He was thirsty, thinking about water as he travelled over the rocks, over the flat stones, over the tiny pebbles, through gorges between high rocky cliffs, through sharp green grasses, coming this way. Now he came to a paperbark tree, cut it with his boomerang, drank the fresh water. Singing and dancing he went on, coming this way.

The cycle continues, telling about the long baskets Wudal wears slung from both shoulders, filling them with honey: bees are humming and droneing inside them. He approaches a stringy bark tree by a large pool. The songs dwell, in turn, on his long honey-baskets; the bees, 'dancing' as they come to the tree for honey; the tree, its branches broken by the wind, and by Wudal himself as he chops them down with his stone axe to get the honeycomb; its flowers, falling on to the flat stones, on to the tiny pebbles, and on to the surface of the pool, losing their petals as they lie there in the dry season; the crow, coming to eat honey from the flowers, 'dancing' among them, and calling out as it flies down to the pool for water: its 'eyes' are the 'eyes' (seeds, or centres) of the flowers themselves; little birds, twittering among the flowers and leaves; a small caterpillar which eats the leaves into lacey patterns; a blanket (frilled) lizard, holding on to the tree with its sharp claws; the pool of fresh water, with people (spirits) standing around it; stone-bladed spears, made by the Wawalag and Ridarrggu people, left resting in the tree by the pool, or being 'tried' by men who are practising with them; the cleared ceremonial ground, with its sacred mound of earth, people of different subsections talking around it; two post figures standing in the clearing, representing two young girls, with bark hair, and dancers circling around them; clouds rising far inland, in Wawalag country, and rain spreading northward; the djuwurarrag bird crying out as it sees the red sunset sky, the 'red cloud'; the Laglag, Maiamaia (etc.) people (spirits) eating raw kangaroo and wallaby meat, spitting out the blood, making the sky red; and finally the 'red cloud' song itself, the redness of the sky reflected, shining, in the red waters of the pool.

The arrangement of this 'bee-and-honey' cycle differs according to who is singing it: the Rirajingu, Djambahdina, Marangu, and certain other duo moiety linguistic units, all have a 'right' to it and a traditional way of treating it. But the main outline, and much of the detail, remain fairly constant; and conventionally this cycle, like a number of others, always concludes with the 'red cloud', although the 'explanation' of its redness depends on which myth-cycle is concerned. It may, for instance, be ascribed to the blood of the Wawalag Sisters, which attracted or repelled the Python and so led to the climax of their story. The connection between the Wawalag myth and Wudal cycle is a tenuous one, said to consist only in a common place of origin—the place where the Wawalag live; Wawalag, like Wudal and Maiamaia and other such names, can refer to a group of people as well as to its individual members. Nevertheless, there are several similarities. The conventionalized figure shown in Plate 5 (the elder Sister) actually belongs to the sacred Wawalag series; but the post figures described in the Wudal songs are almost identical, and also, in some versions, represent two young sisters.

Cross-cutting references and symbolism make this region one of the most fascinating in Aboriginal Australia for the student of myth, song, drama, and graphic art. Even in a single cycle, there are innumerable interlinking expressions and concepts, 'names' in one song repeated in another with subtle variations in meaning and context. The straightforward rain-sequence found in many parts of the Continent (as in the Kaningara example) is here spread among a number of separate cycles, each with its own elaborate imagery. The same imagery and symbolism permeate what could be called informal talking contests, when people with grievances engage in
a flow of impassioned eloquence. Occasionally this is the end of the affair for the time being, especially if nobody appears to take notice. But it can equally well (or could, a few years ago) lead to an open spear-fight because at least one of the speakers has worked himself into a frenzy through his own words. At its simplest, this is merely the use of the appropriate clan symbols: a shark totem man biting the end of his beard, or his fighting bag, shaking his head as he advances, is the great shark with its various ‘singing names’, ferociously attacking his prey. But other images too can be powerful in their effects. One which appears in several cycles, and often reduces people to tears of sadness, is ‘quiet sea’—a stretch of water lying still and calm after a storm.

The people of this region are sometimes said to be more ‘hard-headed’ than most Aborigines. Years of contact with traders from what is now Indonesia sharpened their desire for material things; and they are certainly less retiring and submissive than many of their fellow Australians. But their approach to the everyday world is coloured by a variegated pattern of imagery, expressed through the skilful use of words even more than through graphic art forms, ritual, and dance. They delight in oratory, in sentimental appeals, in symbolism which evokes in vivid terms their own past, their own land, and the people who are linked to it through spiritual even more than through material ties.

To break off at this point is to break off at the beginning. Even leaving aside further consideration of content, there is the problem of creativity, of individual variation—the ‘personal touch’ which is just as important here as it is in situations where less respect is accorded to the voice of tradition. Nevertheless, perhaps enough has been said to emphasize the significance in Aboriginal, and specifically in Arnhem Land perspective, of that dimension of culture and experience which goes beyond the routine, down-to-earth business of making a living: the ‘arts of life’, the domain of the aesthetic.

Within the Aboriginal world are differing traditions, differing conventions, differing styles of expression: but these recede in magnitude before the more far-reaching and spectacular cleavages separating that world from the European cultural tradition which has now superseded it as ‘the Australian way of life’. Nevertheless, the ‘gulf between’ is not unbridgeable. In aesthetic appreciation, in symbolic allusions, in poetic expression, these Aborigines are no more alien to Europeans than many other contemporary peoples are, and assuredly less so than many of those of the past—even of the European past. Understanding these facets of Aboriginal culture means, in the widest sense, learning a new and, substantially, a ‘foreign’ language: but the handicaps here are no more insuperable than in other cases; and the results are at least equally rewarding.

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Reverie

In the mulberry tree,
Of my heart, the thief,
A woman swings,
As green as grief.

Thick from the needles
Of the crooning pine,
Her sad voice murmurs
An old rhyme of mine.

While down the glass
Of this window pane,
Her fingers are smudged
By thick tears of rain.

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GRiffITH WATKINS
1. "Notes and Queries on Modern Painting" would be an apter, if stuffier, title for the speculations which follow. I have no all-embracing thesis to develop. Indeed, my views are muddled and contradictory. It would be folly to pretend to deal with so vast a topic from a single point of view; what is "Modern Painting", after all? If I have an axe to grind, however, this results from the suspicion that we may have been ap­ plain text
to all the “tenets” I am going to question. I have not tried to list them in any order of importance.

Tenet (a): “Abstraction is better than Representation.”

This is a strange belief. All paintings are abstractions from a four-dimensional continuum into a two-dimensional plane. A “representation-al” line-drawing involves a high degree of abstraction.

A note by Maurice Raynal on a 1914 collage “Head” by Picasso: “Picasso has pushed abstraction to the limit. Instead of a subject described, we have an object signified. The picture is no longer even an object, but a datum; a summing-up, a statement—or a ‘state’. And though symbolic contact is kept with reality, it is a tenuous one indeed.”

I do not pretend to understand Raynal’s third and fourth sentences. However, if one wants to use a visual sign which pushes abstraction to the limit, why not simply write the letters HEAD in the middle of one’s canvas? What could be more abstract than that?

Even when one takes Modern painting as a reaction against the extreme representational illusionism of some 19th-century painting, the reaction seems naive and ill-founded. It is perhaps analogous to the naive view that an audience in a theatre believes the play to be “real”. For we always know, of course, that the most trompe-l’oeil of paintings is only a painting. Our response to such a painting is highly complex. Reduce the illusionistic element in painting, and you reduce the complexity of the response.

This anti-illusionist tenet seems to entail a good many more, most of which are concerned to emphasize that a painting is an object, a support covered with pigments. But before I go on to question these subsidiary tenets, I will take this opportunity to express my dissatisfaction with the famous pronouncement of Maurice Denis, and with the countless critics who have parrotted it since he first made it in 1890. He wrote, you will recall: “Remember that a painting—before being a horse in battle or a naked woman or an anecdote of any kind—is essentially a plane surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order.”

Why “before”? Why “essentially”?

Tenet (b): “A painting is an object.”

We have always known that a painting is an object.

Tenet (c): “We must emphasize that fact that the paint is paint.”

We have always known that paint is paint. We have always admired the brushwork of a Rembrandt or a Rubens.

Query: Are our senses so blunted that we can only recognize an impasto when it’s half-an-inch high?

Query: Are “textures” so fashionable because good reproductions are so cheap?

Tenet (d): “We must abolish perspective and emphasize the picture-plane.”

We have always known that a painting is on a flat surface. It is precisely because we have known this that we have been able to enjoy the illusion of perspective.

Tenet (e): “We must allow the canvas (or whatever) to show through the paint, in order to show that the painting is on a canvas (or whatever).”

We have always known that the painting is on a canvas (or whatever) without having to be reminded in such an obvious manner.

Tenet (f): “Paintings should not be literary.”

i.e. they should not tell stories. I fail to see any justification for this dictatorial assumption. Why shouldn’t paintings tell stories?

Are we still, in 1962, reacting against the 19th-century fashion for pictorialized sentimental anecdotes? Must we bar all stories, on this negative ground? Surely there are some un-sentimental stories to be told? What’s wrong with sentimentality, anyway?

Tenet (g): “Paintings should be rough, tough, masculine.”

This, which is a symptom rather than a tenet, I will tentatively call “Brandoism”. It suggests, perhaps, that kindliness and a delight in the real world are strictly for cissies. It evokes a world fit only for Hemingway Heroes to live in.

Tenet (h): “By abstracting, we can emphasize design.”

There is plenty of design in the Old Masters. Most of them used geometrical patterns as the formal bases of their paintings. They, however, covered these patterns up a little, lest they appear too un-subtle to the beholder. Present-day beholders are apparently content with the highly obvious.

Tenet (i): “The painting should be a record of the act of painting it.”

All paintings are necessarily this. Some are very much more.

Tenet (j): “There is something called ‘Pure Art’.”

I would prefer to suggest that there are only paintings (in this case), and that these paintings have various uses; that they are functional. Paintings can: be an investment; cover a crack in the wall; look nice on the landing; be a cocktail-party conversation-piece; unify the lounge-room colour-scheme. And so on.

Tenet (k): “Painters should be absolutely free to paint as they please.”

And so they are, thank goodness, in a free
society. But also, in a free market, they may never sell a single painting. I fail to see why patrons should not commission paintings, to the extent of specifying size, colours, and subject-matter. The results of this approach (such as the Sistine Chapel) haven't been too bad in the past. Why shouldn't artists be competent business-men?

The self-image of many present-day painters, I suspect, is still that of the 19th-century Romantic Bohemian. And each generation of young painters still wastes a great deal of time in noisily attacking a non-existent target—a French Academy which was practically powerless even when Cézanne was a lad. I am reminded of John Armstrong's painting, The Battle of Nothing.

When the Blake Society actually dared to specify a "topic" to be painted in exchange for a £250 prize, one well-known abstractionist protested in these terms: "From now on the era of imposed restrictions, conditions, suggestions, information, etc., begins and a downfall follows." But Michelangelo did pretty well under exactly these conditions.

Perhaps, as Professor Gombrich has suggested, not many painters are capable of successfully facing a completely existentialist situation, in which they are absolutely free to choose any subject, any style, any medium, any size of canvas, and so on. Painterly talent, I suspect, is one of the commonest talents. And I also suspect that even quite major artists are helped by rules, regulations, and conventions. Not all who have talent are "heroic" figures, able or even willing to start Rebuilding the Whole of Art from Scratch (another 20th-century obsession).

Here I reach a contradiction. For, despite my liking for so much variety as possible, I suspect that most of the "great" works of art have been produced when powerful artistic conventions have been operating. When powerful conventions are operating, one seems to get a general level of competence within the particular mode, and very often a "great" artist who exhausts the possibilities of that mode. The conventions of the Elizabethan dramatists, of the Renaissance painters, of the Russian icon-painters, of the 19th-century English novelists, of the French Impressionist painters: all these produced "masters".

Perhaps the 20th-century is qualitatively different from all past centuries; perhaps these historical analogies are useless. We cannot know.

Tenet (1): "Every painter should be original."

See (k) above.

Tenet (m): "The act of painting should be mysterious, terrible, and painful."

Picasso: "People do not realise what they have when they own a picture by me. Each picture is a phial filled with my own blood. That is what has gone into it."

A sad state of affairs, it seems to me, when painters don’t even enjoy painting any more.

Tenet (n): "As it is impossible to define ‘a work or art’, we defy anyone to prove that our old lawnmower isn’t one."

The difficulty here is the familiar one of drawing-the-line: one doesn’t know quite where "art" fades into "non-art". One has a similar difficulty in deciding where prose becomes poetry, and whether the examinee who gets 49% deserves to fail.

But we can distinguish a sonnet from a novel, and an Honours student from a failure. The fact that a piece of driftwood might accidentally reproduce a Henry Moore sculpture does not prevent our distinguishing between a Rembrandt and a lawnmower.

Tenet (o): "The invention of photography has dispensed with the need for representational painting."

What use would a camera have been to the Byzantine artists, to Leonardo, to Vermeer? Was any use to Lautrec?

Tenet (p): "The malerisch is preferable to the linear."

Why?

Tenet (q): "The Alla Prima is preferable to the ‘considered’ painting."

Again, one asks: "Why?" This tenet harks back to Wordsworth half-understood and misapplied: "The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings . . . ."

(Compare the 1920-ish "Progressive" dogma of forcing huge brushes onto tiny school-children, in the interests of "self-expression". Apparently lots of children like doing scratchy little drawings with scratchy little pencils.)

Tenet (r): "Big paintings are better than little paintings." (Gigantism.)

In the Abstract Expressionist mode, they are. For, as decorative murals, they fit nicely into Bauhaus-type buildings. (Motto: "When the Id is kicked out of the door, Pollock comes in at the window.")

But framed bits of Pollock, two feet by three, hung on the living-room wall: these are rather less at home.

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8. Many modern paintings are so badly painted (from the point-of-view of materials) that I doubt whether they will last more than twenty years.

Art-Gallery-Attendant’s Back: a new complaint brought on by having to sweep up fragments of flaking Modern paintings three times a day.

The shifts in fashion come with increasing speed. Are painters becoming like the rest of
us in our Consumers' Society, frenziedly producing deliberately obsolescent junk in order to keep the industrial machine moving?

9. The clashes of textures and colours in Modern painting and architecture are so obvious as to suggest that our senses are becoming monstrously coarsened. Apparently we no longer respond to subtle variations in colour and texture; we respond only to the most violent of opposites.

This coarseness, and the Gigantism mentioned above, are perhaps the results of our exhibition-and-prize system. Historically, this system is quite novel.

10. Has any representational painting won any important recent competition? If not, why not?

11. Have we, in general, exchanged the complex for the simple, the subtle for the obvious? Has the reaction against all the ingredients of earlier painting left us with nothing at all worth talking about?

For a painting can have formal values and be about human experience. It can have perspective and be flat. It can show its brushwork and be illusionistic.

12. A great deal of 20th-century painting has consisted of wry jokes about painting. The most recent development, which should arrive in Australia fairly soon, is to have paintings which are jokes about the perceptual processes involved in looking at paintings (see, for example, Escher and Albers).

Where do we go from here?

13. Abstract Expressionist practice corresponds quite closely with Symboliste doctrine; Symbolisme has, however, arrived on the visual scene fifty years after its appearance on the literary scene. The long-overdue literary questioning of Symboliste orthodoxy has been conducted over the past few years by Donald Davie (Articulate Energy), Frank Kermode (Romantic Image) and Graham Hough (Image & Experience). The only analogous questioning in the visual field is a brilliant and neglected essay by Father Vincent Turner, S.J.6

14. One major Symboliste desideratum is that a work of art should not be paraphrasable into any language (see Tenet f above). A perfect Symboliste painting cannot be discussed, and it certainly can't be evaluated. In front of such a work, each of us is alone with his private and incomunicable reactions. Critics who adopt the Symboliste position should logically, therefore, stop writing and play Bingo instead. Indeed, confronted by the following critique (with which I shall conclude) I feel, as an Aggravated Square, that Bingo is a very sane pastime indeed:

"Helen Frankenthaler continues to work in the crisis area of freedom and necessity: more and more, internecine war flares where reason and unreason dance their padded knife-fight. She paints our case: how to be intelligently free under the Cheshire-cat smirk of self-consciousness. This is deadly pressure: in this show 'problems' seem to have been summoned, under the guise of 'images', to ease it. In most cases this takes the form of a bled or aggravated square or rectangle which serves as a domicile shaken by the return of the prodigal chaos. Black with Shadow is one of the pictures that try for unity through the biology of painting rather than, like Newman, through its physics. Perhaps it demonstrates the savagery that obtains between the two: the black square braces against the kiss of an orange leech, while a waste of eggs and energy spumes from the jarred rigidity. This is an important and embattled artist. Prices unquoted."7

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(1) Picasso by Maurice Raynal. Skira/Geneva 1953/p.56.
(2) The Banquet Years by Roger Shattuck. Faber/London 1959/p.231.
(3) Stanislaus Rapotec in The Nation/23.ix.61/p.15.
(4) The Tyranny of Abstract Art by E. H. Gombrich (Atlantic Monthly, April 1958). (Title changed from The Vogue of Abstract Art by a polemical editor.)
**Alec King**

**Australian Poet and Settler**  
—Tough or Sentimental

Judith Wright's image of the double tree, in her poem 'for New England', is an image that speaks to us of the central problem of writing poetry in Australia. Since poetic language is the most concentrated expression of an imagination common to all men in varying degrees, the image points at the problem, not only of writing imaginatively, but also of living imaginatively in Australia. Judith Wright finds in herself 'the double tree', the 'homesick and the swarthy native, the English and the indigenous tree of Australia. Not until they fuse into a single tree will she find her land turn sweet in her mind.

This is not an image of adjustment, but of something more difficult and more rewarding. There have been two kinds of adjustment practised by new Australians (that is by all who have been brought to this country either by ship or by womb): one has been sentimental and the other tough. The sentimental adjustment was to surround oneself with the properties of the old country: to erect a palisade round the spirit of oaks, sycamores, blackberry hedges, rabbits, blackbirds, sparrows, old prints, four-poster beds and imported suits. The tough adjustment was to go native in the white man's way: to build a shack which excluded nothing but rain and wind, to bare one's breast to raw life and 'have it returned covered in welts', and to obliterate if possible the civilisation left behind.

The sentimental adjustment still goes on, the tough has bred an Australian myth. Both are false because they each ignore what cannot be ignored. We cannot live in a new country, making ourselves at home in it, if we fence ourselves against it. And we cannot make the new country a home of the human spirit, if we grub up the roots which feed that spirit. Judith Wright's image of the double tree does not mean adjustment at all, but a process of growing the new in a soil already rich in inherited properties. If we cut ourselves off from this rich inheritance, the 'old' world, in which our human spirit grows, we merely confront the new with a kind of inarticulate stupidity. To live only sentimentally is to live soft; to live only toughly is to live mean. To live as the double tree, as many have done who have shaped our country, is to live whole.

The notion that a new country requires a new mind is a trivial reflection from the world of practical life, which necessitates new skills, new adhoc manner and relationships, and a constant improvisation. It does not require a new mind. On the contrary it requires the oldest possible mind, one grounded in the enduring and ancient art of human life. Only such a mind can fully imagine and articulate the new, finding for it its true language, transforming its raw strangeness into the unexpected and the fresh, so that it becomes part of the inexhaustible variety and plenitude of life offered to man's spirit for love, hate, or suffering. Those who cannot or will not transform a new country so that it may grow its graces and ugliness in the visionary life of man, will find themselves sentimentally or meanly adjusting themselves to it, disfiguring it or themselves.

The analogy of this with the writing of poetry in Australia is very close. Many people have thought that a new country demands a new poetry, as if a poet could suddenly create a form of words as unlikely as a blackboy which said 'Australian'. On the contrary it demands a poetry grounded as deeply as possible in the traditional art of poetic making; for its special task is to grow the new images in the age-old world of seeing, feeling, understanding (the world that poetry cares for), so that these images can come to be at home there within the house of man's welcoming and inventive mind whose structure is the poem.

Our earlier poets were not trying to write a new poetry. They were groping imaginatively into the new country by creating the familiar poetic world, and feeling how the new images of a new land came to life in the rhythms of an ancient art of seeing. When Harpur wrote his 'Midsummer Noon in an Australian Forest' he was recreating the form and tone of an 18th century mode whose origins are as old as Horace. It was a mode of easy contemplation, fondling the memory of natural sights and sounds, and opposed to the brisk concentrations of urban satire. To write such a mode in Australia has been thought a weakness, a carry-over from a way of life that should have been left behind. This is nonsense. He was writing true poetry for
Australia; and his poem does authentically discover to us a few of the sights and sounds of this country to be known with ease and freshness through the long practised mode of imagining which enfolds them.

A Midsummer Noon in the Australian Forest

Not a sound disturbs the air,
There is quiet everywhere;
Over plains and over woods
What a mighty stillness broods!
All the birds and insects keep
Where the coolest shadows sleep;
Even the busy ants are found
Resting in their pebbled mound;
Even the locust clingeth now
Silent to the barky bough;
Over hills and over plains
Quiet, vast and slumbrous, reigns.
Only there's a drowsy humming
From yon warm lagoon slow coming
'Tis the dragon-hornet—see!
All bedaubed resplendently,
Yellow on a tawny ground—
Each rich spot nor square nor round,
Rudely heart-shaped, as it were
The blunted and hasty impres there
Of a vermeil-crusted seal
Dusted o'er with golden meal.
Only there's a droning where
You bright beetle shines in air,
Tracks it in its gleaming sight
With a slanting beam of light,
Rising in the sunshine higher,
Till its shards flame out like fire.
Every other thing is still,
Save the ever-wakeful rill,
Whose cool murmur only throws
Cooler comfort round repose;
Or some ripple in the sea
Of leafy boughs, where, lazily,
Tired summer, in her bower
Turning with the noontide hour
Heaves a slumbrous breath ere she
Once more slumbers peacefully.
O 'tis easeful here to lie
Hidden from noon's scorching eye,
In this grassy cool recess
Musing thus of quietness.

Harpur wrote much of his poetry with Wordsworth in his mind. It is supposed that he wrote bad Australian poetry because of this, on the assumption that Wordsworth wrote his poetry in order to adjust himself to the Lake Country and its odd inhabitants, and that therefore it wouldn't do in Australia. But Wordsworth's interest, as he says himself, was in the mind of man. He was rediscovering the relation between mind and the universe of life around.

To have learnt from his poetry might have been, for Harpur, an immeasurable strength. What is weak in Harpur is not his belief in Wordsworth as a master of poetry, but that, instead of learning from him, he tended to imitate him.

The early poets of Australia are, like Harpur, simply not great enough. We could not have expected a great poet to have appeared here at this time. And yet it is the irony of the situation that only a great poet could have shown us what being an Australian poet really means. Only a great poet could have created a whole world of natural and human life within which the new, the strange, the bizarre, could have walked and declared itself—could have found its voice in the age-old 'mankind of our going'.

It was inevitable that poets should soon have fallen for easier ways of being Australian. The balladists took to adjusting their poetry to the tough rampage of practical life. They are sometimes called our folk poets. They are worlds away from folk poets. In effect they abandoned poetry to record, in tumbling verse, the physical exploits of hardy men and their togetherness. Patterson is the better versifier, because he is less a poet than Lawson. There are signs in Lawson, especially if we include his short stories, that he could feel the old world of humankind, its ten thousand year capacity for boredom, heartache, loneliness, longing, as well as for humour, devilry and prowess. He might, if he had been greater, have imagined for us the comic and desperate heroism of man, to whose tune a crowd of go-getting Australians spasmodically worked and fought, staggered and sang and wept.

The balladists adjusted poetry to Australia by ignoring poetry. They chose the tough solution. They chose to be Australian by writing a form of verse capable of reflecting what was peculiarly because superficially Australian, as if the imagination of humankind had to be left behind in order to feel authentic in a new country. There appeared soon beside them the poets who adjusted poetry to Australia by choosing the sentimental solution. They imported furniture and landscaping to protect imagination and poesy against the raw and the tough.

The oldest poetry of this sort and the most interesting is 'The Bush' by O'Dowd. It is, in intention, a rapt meditation in the high style, on a longed-for unity of the 'two trees', a unity of our inherited imagination and the new images of this country; and yet it succeeds, in the end, in achieving a sentimental solution. The length of the poem, the ode-like structure of stanzas pleated and laced with 'language strong and high', shining with the names and echoes of the myths and legends of our race—the intention of
all this is to create a world of poetry capable of recalling our richest inheritance of imagination, within which the images of the strange and new may be known and relished. But, in fact, this hardly ever happens, for the strange and new are pushed away and obscured by fancy and dream; and instead of entering firmly into the poem, they tend to dissolve.

The poem remembers the fancifulness of childhood, how

... my boyhood saw how Sunbursts flamed
Or filmy hinds lured on a pale Oisin,
Where lofty indignant saplings crowding claimed
The digger's racket for their plundered queen;
And heard within you lichen 'mullock-head'
Lord Edward's waiting horsemen moan in sleep;
Or flew the fragrant path of swans consol
Lit's exiled daughter wandering with me,
And traced below the Wattle River rolling Exuberant and golden toward the sea.

The poem dreams, also, how

Mother Bush in your deep dreams abide
Cupid's alert for man and maid unborn,
Apprentice Pucks amid your saplings hide,
And wistful gorges wait a Roland's horn:
Wallet of Sigurd shall this swag replace,
And centaurs curvet where those brumbies race.
That drover's tale of love shall greater duly
Through magic prisms of a myriad years,
Till burns Isolde to Tristram's fervour newly,
Or Launcelot to golden Guinivere's.

The poetry, here, does not meet head on the bush and its gorges, the brumby and the drover, and transfigure them; it merely dreams them out of sight into a legendary future.

O'Dowd knew well enough the meaning of the 'two trees', and that to try to tear up our ancient roots as we move away from the old world to settle our bodies in the new, is foolish nonsense:

Who fenced the nymphs in European vales?
Or Pan tabooed from all but Oxford dreams?
Warned Shakespeare off from foreign Plutarch's tales?
Or tethered Virgil to Italian themes?

And when the body sailed from your control
Think ye we left behind in bond the soul?
Whate'er was yours is ours in equal measure.
The Temple was not built for you alone,
Altho' 'tis ours to grace the common treasure

With Lanes and Penates of our own
But the effect of the poem is in the end sentimental. The new country is diminished and lost inside the fulsome poetry; and the roll call of names and titles from our past of legend and myth expresses a nostalgia for what is, in the poem, unimagined and unimaginable. The poem becomes a Palace of Art like Tennyson's, gorgeous but so muffled up against the prickle and naked touch of the actual Australia that we are aware, very soon, of being lost in endless self-indulgence.

The poetry of Hugh McRae shows another kind of sentimental solution. In effect, it chooses not to live in Australia at all. There is, of course, nothing wrong with poetry that wants to live somewhere else—except to those who insist that poets writing in Australia should always be writing of Australia (as they might insist that Milton should not have written about Man's first disobedience, but about the enticements of Sir Lucius Lucifer inviting the innocent Adam Perkins and his wife Eva, residents of the pastoral village of Finchley, to join him and his friends in the wicked Pandemonium of London). McRae's jolly poems, his amorous poems, his romantic poems, are written in a country of the mind, where he can choose whatever furnishings he likes, Greek laurel trees and satyrs, 18th century pubs and wenches, medieval castles and barons. His well articulated poetry is technically more polished and elegant than any before it, because it plays with its wanton or romantic images fancifully, and does not often have to cope with more stringent imaginative problems. But it is not a false poetry unless it is supposed to be a sort of allegorical vision of the real Australian way of life in which all males are free to be satyrs, all females plump wenches, and all industrialists robber barons.

When, however, McRae does write a poem of Australia, the images of his country of the mind crowd forward to blur his sight:

Australian Spring
The bleak-faced Winter, with his braggart winds,
(Coiled to his scrappy throat in tattered black),
Posts down the highway of his late domain,
His spurs like leeches in his bleeding hack.
He rides to reach the huge embattled hills
Where all the brooding summer he may lie
Engulf’d in Kosciusko’s silent snow,
His shadow waving o’er the lofty sky.

And jolly Spring, with love and laughter gay
Full fountaining, lets loose her tide of bees
Upon the waking ember-flame of bloom
New kindled in the honey-scented trees.

The old, old man forsakes the chimney-hole,
Where erst he warmed his bones and lazy blood,
And, clasping Molly to his wheezing breast,
Triumphant floats, cock-whoop, upon the flood.

This is well bred but fanciful. It does not make us know an Australian spring in a fresh way by seeing how man’s old imagination can dance to yet another unexpected rhythmic variation of nature (as a northern autumn is known in a fresh way through Keats who uses its image to figure out, with a profound renewal of pain and pleasure, the rhythmic cycle of birth and death to which all life belongs). On the contrary, it invents fanciful properties (especially in the romantic, merry-England, last verse) which disguise an Australian spring for a neat poetic charade. It is a poem of imaginative and sentimental ignorance—rather a nice one, too.

A new country is not a home for the human spirit until it is loved (or hated). And both the ‘it’ and the ‘love’ are necessary. Love (whose analogy is a poem) is sight and insight and the consequent joy, not self-indulgence, sentiment, or adjustment. Love exposes itself to what is seen, and transfigures the ‘it’ into a ‘thou’ (to use Martin Buber’s terms)), homefelt, enchanting, even in its strangeness and otherness. It is supposed that Australian poetry is getting better because it is beginning to take Australia for granted, and so to use Australian imagery as unselfconsciously as English poetry uses English imagery. But neither love nor poetry takes anything for granted. If it is getting better as Australian poetry, it is because it is getting better as poetry. And by being better poetry it is a better sort of insight into an Australia which it has no intention of taking for granted. On the contrary, it intends to bring Australia home to itself, to put it in its place within the ancient world of human love, imagination, and knowledge. The greater the poem, the more practised in the old wisdom and intelligence of our race, the more it can love and understand the place of its gestation, this fragment of cosmos round about us here in this country at this time.

Australian poetry is an image of our capacity to make something of this country, not merely to expose ourselves ignorantly to its strangeness, or to cover ourselves up sentimentally against its rawness. It is still a little fumbling; but then so are we all in our imaginative uncertainty. We tend to live still, like the newest settlers, oscillating between toughness and sentimentality. We import and copy culture-objects from the old world, not to feed our minds by a nourishment which impels discrimination, but indiscriminately to put a simulacrum of civilization round us over which we peer at the uncivilized hinterland which we guiltily call the ‘real’ Australia. Our public gardens sprawl with rose bushes trying to preserve their nostalgic odour in the tough heat. In the country we construct suburban homes, their Axminster wall-to-walls sweating in protest. Our broadcasting stations, B-class and National, tend to be divided, in accent and pre-occupation, into the tough and the sentimental. We are, in the eyes of the others, full of physical prowess and resourcefulness, but their praise of us as young and virile makes us wince a little, for we are, like them, heirs of all the ages and capable of grown up humanity, and do not much like an image of ourselves as a gang of boys, loud, unbuttoned, and body-minded.

All men live simultaneously in two worlds, in the world of mankind, and in the physical world of our birth or adoption; and the two trees of life growing in these two worlds must fuse into one for men to be whole. But the fusion is more difficult in a new country. To be self-consciously Australian, or self-consciously un-Australian, is to be uncertain of one’s true centre, and unable to let the double tree of life grow in unselfconscious naturalness. But it has grown and is growing. The poem and the settler settle in, learning from the imagination of Man how to feel and know this once bizarre and seemingly inhuman land. They no longer fear to belong at once to mankind and to Australia.
Anyone presuming to meddle no matter how gingerly with the manifold figure of Faust will sooner or later find his dazed attention harking back to the Gospel-tale of another man bedevilled by an unclean spirit who, on being asked for his credentials, replied: "My name is Legion: for we are many." For that original 16th-century Dr. Faustus, dubious and boastful thaumaturge, was at least superhumanly potent in conjuring up a legionary fictional progeny who, however different might be the successive wombs of time in which they were conceived, still retained in their ravaged features some remnants of the founder's face, still contrived to wear "the family nose for individual use", and always piously cherished the ancestral connexion with the Prince of Darkness. This monstrous multiplication of Fausts—all the sad variety of Hell—may be glimpsed in Miss E. M. Butler's The Fortunes of Faust. I say "glimpsed" because, though she treats in some detail about fifty specimens of the genus Faust (nicely classified), she has even so been rigorously selective. Many obscure or less attractive members of the species are accorded only a passing nod or are coldly coffined, unsung and unwep, in the capacious bibliography. And doubtless yet others have wriggled through the dragnet altogether. One certainly has: the subject of this paper.

It is not surprising that the Faust story should have been, and should continue to be, popular with audience and author, though it is perhaps remarkable that the errant prototype should have sired a mostly stay-at-home race rarely venturing outside Germany. What makes the Faust myth permanently alluring to poets, philosophers and humbler people is that it symbolizes a key situation in man's existence as a moral being, and so offers means varied, colourful, far-ranging, penetrative, for probing and dramatizing the human condition. It is a temptation myth, basically similar to the Genesis story of the Fall of Man. When the satanic serpent inveigled curious Eve into testing the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, he thrust upon previously contented humanity not only a new self-consciousness, a novel and sharp awareness of sexuality, but also moral responsibility, the discrimination between good and evil. For his daring and dangerous desire to know, to explore the mysteries and potentialities of the universe, man was ejected from the amoral, effortless felicity of Eden into a dismaying ardous and perilous world—a world bereft of the lush leisure of Paradise but possessed of the bracing spiritual advantage of being, in Keats's phrase, "a vale of soul-making". Ruefully man discovered his sundering but dynamic duality, his status as a creature intermediate between angel and animal, a prey to warring and jarring forces. He was a shuttlecock, a battlefield, a tug-of-war, a continuous and fluctuating conflict: strife between higher and lower impulses, between lofty idealism and brute "reality", the spiritual and the sensual, the pure and the impure, the creative and the destructive; everywhere and always the confronting choice between the way up and the way down. Ever since, man has woken to find himself in a dark wood and has struggled to find the narrow path of righteousness, to work out laboriously, painfully his salvation.

So in Goethe's Faust we trace the frenzied and bewildered course of a man "with two souls housed within his breast", each wrestling for mastery:

The one has passion's craving crude for love,
And hugs a world where sweet the senses rage;
The other longs for pastures fair above,
Leaving the murk for lofty heritage.

This indicates one aspect of the conflict within Faust—a clash between a rage to live in the senses and a longing for an exalted spirituality. It is expressed rather differently when Faust says:

Unwelcome, alien, hostile things intrude
On all of truth and shining excellence;
Then, having this world's treasure, we conclude
Things of more worth are frauds that cheat the sense;
And the loud world with its distracting strife
Benumbs the very nerve of noble life.

This is the sensitive idealist's shrinking from the confident, coarsening "values" of the world in which however he must to some extent live and move and have his being: the loud, distracting world and its treasure are opposed to "things..."
of more worth”—nobility, truth, shining excellence. In the scenes concerned with Margareta’s seduction and Faust’s agonized remorse, the conflict is translated into terms of sex and love—the first being a making use of another person’s body as an instrument of self-gratification, the second involving as well as the satisfaction of sexual desire such feelings as affection, tenderness, respect and unselfishness. It is the difference, say, between Les Liaisons Dangereuses and Keats’s letters to Fanny Brawne. Faust’s experience brings him to a harrowing realization that sowing the wild oats of sensual pleasure can yield a luxuriant crop of guilt and self-reproach.

Mephistopheles, the Devil, the tempter, is traditionally the active agent of evil who as the power of this world can proffer temptations of dazzling grandeur, and can too make it magically possible for the tempted victim, the Faust, to sound the depths and heights of his cravings for knowledge, experience, dominion, happiness or whatever the goal may be. A sort of dijinn from a bottle, a god from an infernal machine, he can with diabolical efficiency save time, labour and dull abstraction and enable his client to run the gamut of his desires within the necessary dramatic fore-shortening and with the preferable dramatic vigour and vividness. He is the embodiment and symbol of wickedness, and as such takes shape and nature from the author of his being. He may be a “lively worm”, a belly-crawling reptile exciting both terror and contempt; or he may be an archangel ruined, the Byronic hero-rebel animating the first two books of Paradise Lost and inspiring awe, admiration, even sympathy. For Goethe he is in the famous phrase “the spirit that denies”. He is, says G. H. Lewes, “so utterly and essentially irreverent, that even in the presence of the creator, he feels no awe; the grander emotions are not excitable within his soul: and, like all his species, he will not believe that others feel such emotions: ‘Pardon me,’ he says, ‘I cannot utter fine phrases.’ Mephisto is not a hypocrite: he cannot even pay that homage to virtue. He is a sycophantic and simple.”

Mephistopheles, if one may say so without questioning his supernatural origins, is very much a man of the world, cynical, mocking, sophisticated, brutal, self-assured, at ease in the beau monde and the demi-monde. The devil is, we know, a gentleman, and if we look at him through the eyes of a Romantic, he is a fine gentleman of a distinctly 18th-century type; his speech is colloquial, slangy, racy, irreverent, taunting; he is Clarissa’s Lovelace. Goethe’s devil is not at all admirable, and he is moreover under suspicion of being (once the whole design is seen) an ass: he cannot win his heavenly wager—God has loaded the dice. Mephisto is merely a gad-fly to sting forward backsliding man; he toils to serve creation. That, at least, is the role assigned him in Heaven; but Mephisto too has his dualism of being, and there are moments when he can speak with the magniloquence of a “strange son of Chaos”. Nor by the end of Part I is his failure apparent, though it has been presented as a “foregone conclusion”. Prince of Lies or Prince of Flies, he can plume himself on a noticeable achievement. Even so, the prime mover is doubtless Faustus, and the potent devil is in Faustus’ breast: “Myself am Hell.” But his questionable insignificance apart, and though Goethe might not have agreed, Mephisto is in one reincarnation the Byron of Don Juan as he appeared to the righteous Evangelicals of the time, fluttering with mortal offence the shocked hems of their starched garments; and as he appeared to the aspiring and reverent imagination of Keats, who cried out in a fury of indignation and wounded sensitivity: “How horrible an example of human nature is this man, who has no pleasure left him but to gloat over and jeer at the most awful incidents of life! Oh! this is a paltry originality, which consists in making solemn things gay and gay things solemn, and yet it will fascinate thousands, by the very diabolical outrage of their sympathies.”

Mephistopheles incarnates his creator’s notions of what is evil, but he is not, we feel, for Goethe a terrible or important figure as he is for Milton. It is Faust who is the focus of interest and involvement for Goethe. What is Faust striving for in his divine discontent? And how will he reach fulfillment? By the time of the pact-scene, “the ageing scholar in his Gothic study has been transformed into an ardent and palpitating human being whose quest is not knowledge but life”.4 Auden sees him as the typical Romantic hero:

The Faust of Marlowe is simply an old professor who wants to be a god-like hero in the epic sense. He wants power to do great deeds and win glory, he wants to sleep with the most beautiful girls, he wants to be eternally twenty years old. Goethe’s Faust has quite other aims. He doesn’t want to do anything, he wants to experience everything. Hence the curious wager with Mephistopheles, for to cry to a moment of experience, “Stay: you are so beautiful,” would be to renounce his quest, to exclude some possible future experience. He does not seduce Marguerite because he desires her or become a swamphdrafter because he wants to do good to mankind, but because he wants to know what it feels like to be a seducer and a benefactor.5

Or one might say that Faust ranges through the
length and breadth of human experience that he may come to terms with life; he seeks a *modus vivendi*. Only after a comprehensive sampling of the storms and stresses of life can he know what it is he has to do, what vocation, what function it is that will still his restlessness. Anyway, only through a comprehensive experiencing of life can Goethe magnify him into a towering image of man and mankind's predicament. Like a latter-day Christ, Faust will identify himself with all mankind, will suffer their sufferings and shoulder the burden of their existence, will point at last to thesaving light:

My heart, from learning's tyranny set free,
Shall no more shun distress, but take its toll
Of all the hazards of humanity,
And nourish mortal sadness in my soul.
I'll sound the heights and depths that men

Their very souls shall be with mine entwined,
I'll load my bosom with their weal and woe,
And share with them the shipwreck of mankind.

Though it is of no great significance in Goethe's presentation, I will mention a further characteristic of his Faust. Besides being a titanic symbol of humanity, Faust is in his local habitation a scholar, a recluse, an intellectual. He is introspective and hesitant, cut off from the unthinking, instinctive, animal happiness of simple people but yearning after it, longing to share wholeheartedly and unselfconsciously in the uncomplicated enjoyments of common life—the beer-drinking, the dancing, the pretty girls—but prevented by the knot intrinsic of his very nature. He has the academic's awkwardness, his lack of aplomb in the social graces:

I have the gravest doubts of my success,
Deficient as I am in fine address.
In front of other folk I often quail,
And through embarrassment am bound to fail.

But Mephistopheles, a Turveydrop of Deportment,
can offer brisk encouragement:

You'll soon improve, my friend, have no misgiving;
Once self-assured, you learn the art of living.
The Devil, we note again, moves with sang-froid in good society.

These comments on the Faust legend and Goethe's handling of it are obviously superficial. They are also deliberately partial. I have merely been disentangling one or two threads of interest, underlining a few motifs, that reappear in a different context and with a different emphasis in the English poem I am to discuss. This poem, which has been called a mid-Victorian *Faust*, is Dipsychus by Arthur Hugh Clough. It is neither so great nor so famous an achievement as Goethe's drama. Clough did not live to complete it, nor had the fragments that survive reached any finality of expression or organization. Compared with *Faust*, Dipsychus lacks a wide variety of scene, any striking dramatic development, and a hero of epic proportions. But though Clough was probably stimulated by a rereading of Goethe to cast his poem into the form of a dialogue between a kind of Faust and a kind of Mephistopheles, Dipsychus is not to be dismissed as a miserably unsuccessful attempt to imitate Goethe. It dramatizes a conflict that is genuinely Clough's own; and the conflict is presented with a scrupulousness, subtlety, and wit that ensure the poem's still being read with interest, sympathy and enjoyment.

*Dipsychus* is a protracted debate between two characters whom Clough first designated as Mephistopheles and Faustulus—the ironical diminutive is notable; but Faustulus was later abandoned in favour of Dipsychus, the two-souled, and Mephistopheles is in general simply called the Spirit. "The thing which it is attempted to represent," says Clough in an amusing prose Epilogue, "is the conflict between the tender conscience and the world." Dipsychus is a young man shivering hesitantly upon the momentous brink of adult life, painfully undecided about his future course of action and (which cuts much deeper) anxiously questioning whether any kind of decisive action is desirable or even possible to a man with high ideals. For to act is to commit oneself to the world and the world's materialistic values, and to make any great success in the big world is to play into the hands of the devil. This is the primary theme: the inevitable collision between the inner world of the individual and the outer world of society to which he must in some degree fit himself. The tender conscience, the exalted soul, the high-flying ego-ideal—whatever we wish to call it—is appalled by the discrepancy between its standards and the standards of the world about it. It is for the middling many a mere matter of adjustment, as modern jargon has it, of compromise; but to such a thorough-going idealist as Dipsychus, to compromise is to admit defeat, to contaminate one's aloof purity. Yet for him complete moral insulation against the world is not a satisfactory answer; he is ambitious to perform great and noble deeds, to help his fellow-men, to act an energetic and useful part in life. To do that he must descend from his pedestal into the dusty arena, and in so doing must soil his shining conscience. . . . Round and about and over this central and salient quarrel the debate skirmishes, manoeuvres, locks perplexedly; and as one might expect, it is when the problem is conceived in
term of love and religion that it is most baffling, most acutely rending. Diagrammatically the
dilemma is not exceptional or peculiar, though
not for everyone is it such a nagging, disabling
ulcer of radical uncertainty. Most men, perhaps,
start out with more workaday ideals or, adol-
escence past and middle-age coming on, recall
but rarely their trailing clouds of glory and com-
fortably accept a regimen of high living and plain
thinking. Yet there will always be those who see
in Dipsychus a wrestler with a quandary not
unlike their own.

Dipsychus was the product of Clough’s hasty
vacation-trip to Venice, and the scene of the poem
is set there. Whether the setting is meant to have
any particular poetic significance is not clear, unless it is that sensuous and sensual
delights are conspicuously lively and accessible
there, in the city “where naked Venus keeps”,
according to Pope, for whom and his contem-
poraries it was renowned as the most luxurious
brothel in Europe; the city too (as we are re-
minded in the poem) which only thirty years
before had been the conniving witness of Byron’s
picturesque debaucheries—

The ground which Byron used to ride on,
And do I don’t know what beside on.
The world, the flesh and the devil, then, are
only too much with Dipsychus as he sits, melan-
choly and censorious, in the Piazza, watching the
animated crowds bent on exuberant pleasure.
It is evening, and Sunday—not an English Sunday.
“Christ is not risen,” he repeats, quoting verses
he made “last year at Naples”. The verses are
also Clough’s, and express a mood of tormented
and darkly bitter disillusionment; he has lost his
formerly fervent and wholehearted belief in Chris-
tianity, which to his sceptical mind is now seen
to possess no proven, no sure historical authen-
ticity; and the bereavement pains and shocks him.
Besides this despair of a nature that longs to
believe but is debarred from doing so by a strong
sense of inescapable fact, there is a savage irony
evoked by the contemplation of a world for which
—all too patently—Christ never was risen, never
will be risen. The attitude, as we see later, is
complex; for Clough and Dipsychus, though re-
luctantly compelled to scepticism, have still a deep
nostalgic reverence for religious aspiration and
for the moral nobility of Christianity. They both
strain after a Puritanical subduing of the flesh and
the world, and so look with contempt on the easy
acceptors and enjoyers of sensual revellings and
vitiating moral standards. Yet for them also the
world with its joys and rewards has powerful
attractions, and they wonder whether their shrink-
ing from the coarse and animal may not after all
be a wishy-washy timidity, whether the tender
conscience is not too tender, whether they are
beautifully sensitive or only nesh. Hence the
irony directs itself two ways, both to the world
that disregards fine moral excellence and to the
possibly over-conscientious, over-introspective
observer.

“Christ is not risen.” As Dipsychus solilo-
quizes, the Spirit interpolates his comments, a
“disparaging, sardonic, and cynical familiar”.8
His is the voice of assured, mocking “common-
sense” that never boggles at the status quo but
uses it, accepts it, is free and easy with it. Even
religion and its institutions (as the world con-
ceives them)—by law established—are to be ac-
cepted with and like everything else: the devil
is a conservative.

Christ is not risen? Oh indeed!
Wasn’t aware that was your creed. . .

Dear, how odd!
He’ll tell us next there is no God.
I thought ’twas in the Bible plain,
On the third day he rose again.

H’m! and the tone then after all
Something of the ironical?
Sarcastic, say; or were it fitter
To style it the religious bitter? . . .

Nay—
’Twas well enough once in a way;
Such things don’t fall out every day.
Having once happened, as we know,
In Palestine so long ago,
How should it now at Venice here?
Where people, true enough, appear
To appreciate more and understand
Their ices, and their Austrian band,
And dark-eyed girls—
Dipsychus continues to muse on the garish scene
before him, revolving the ironical discrepancy
between the noble Ideal and the sordid Actual;
gloomy, withdrawn, the introvert:

The whole great square they fill,
From the red flaunting streamers on the
staffs,
And that barbaric portal of St. Mark’s,
To where, unnoticed, at the darker end,
I sit upon my step. One great gay crowd.
The Campanile to the silent stars
Goes up, above—its apex lost in air.
While these—do what?
The Spirit answers readily and with verve, in
pace and jostling verses that rise to excited,
almost incoherent whooppee:

Enjoy the minute,
And the substantial blessings in it;
Ices, par exemple; evening air,
Company, and this handsome square;
Some pretty faces here and there;
Music! Up, up; it isn’t fit
With beggars here on steps to sit.
Up—to the café! Take a chair
And join the wiser idlers there.
Aye! what a crowd! and what a noise!
With all these screaming half-breached boys.

Partout dogs, boys, and women wander—
And see, a fellow singing yonder;
Singing, ye gods, and dancing too—
Tooraloo, tooraloo, tooraloo, loo;
Fiddle di, diddle di, diddle di da
Figaro sü, Figaro giù—
Figaro qui, Figaro là!
How he likes doing it! Ah, ha, hal
But Dipsychus, on his "lonely pious altitude," is
immune
from such infectious gaiety:
While these do what? Ah, heaven, too
true, at Venice
Christ is not risen either!

At the beginning of Scene II ("the public
garden") Dipsychus is a little more cheerfully
responsive to the external world: "Assuredly, a
lively scene!" What he goes on to note appreciatively,
however, is not lively or human; he
expresses instead a rhapsodical "Romantic" feeling
for Nature—"for "beauteous" scenery: "the great
Alps, rounding grandly o'er, Huge arc, to the
Dalmatian shore". There is a pointed contrast
in the Spirit's reply, wittily clinched by the rhyming
of Azzunzione and funzione:
This rather stupid place today,
It's true, is most extremely gay;
And rightly—the Assunzione
Was always a gran' funzione.

And now, after Dipsychus has questioned the
identity of his Mephisto—
What is this persecuting voice that haunts
me?
What? whence? of whom? How am I to
detect?
Myself or not myself? My own bad
thoughts,
Or some external agency at work,
To lead me who knows whither?—
there comes his first testing, and the general
conflict between the World and the Spirit is
made acute and particular in the attraction
and repulsion of sexual desire. Mephisto, practised
connoisseur of Eve's flesh, points out the "lots of
pretty girls" with "their dark exuberance of
hair;"
Black eyes, rich tints, and sundry graces
Of classic pure Italian faces!

Dipsychus responds to the challenge in what may
be styled his affronted-exclamatory vein:
Off, off! Oh heaven, depart, depart, depart!
Oh me! the toad sly-sitting at Eve's ear
Whispered no dream more poisonous than
this!

Such vapid, repetitive rhetoric protests too much,
of course, reveals the essential instability: a hair-

trigger susceptibility to the sexual bait is
precariously balanced by a shocked shying from the
loathsome trap. The Spirit hums a verse from
Béranger—"Ah comme je regrette Mon bras si
dodu"—and Dipsychus invokes the aid of Words-
worthian Nature in his struggle for moral purity.
"Preserve me!" he cries to the clear stars, the
solemn and icy Alps. But they cannot. He
wavers before the inviting invitation of a passing
girl:

Spirit
There was a glance, I saw you spy it—
So! shall we follow suit and try it?
Poo! what a goose you are! quick, quick!
This hesitation makes me sick.
You simpleton! what's your alarm?
She'd merely thank you for your arm.

Dipsychus
Sweet thing! ah well! but yet I am not sure.
Ah no. I think she did not mean it. No.

Spirit
Plainly, unless I much mistake,
She likes a something in your make:
She turned her head—another glance—
She really gives you every chance.

Dipsychus
Ah, pretty thing—well, well. Yet should
I go?
Alas, I cannot say. What should I do?

Spirit
What should you do? Well, that is funny!
I think you are supplied with money.

Dipsychus
No, no—it may not be. I could, I would—
And yet I would not—cannot. To what
end?

Spirit
Trust her for teaching! Go but you,
She'll quickly show you what to do.
Well, well! It's too late now—
Dipsychus certainly behaves ludicrously here,
and the Spirit has the advantage. The comedy,
based as it is on the robust facts of sexual life,
would no doubt have been condemned as nastily
continental by the agreed "public" standards of
Victorian morality; and in fact the second and
meatier half of this scene does not appear in the
version printed in 1869 by Clough's wife. The
humour is indeed nearer to Prior or Pope than
one would expect from a young square-toes nour-
ished in Rugby Chapel. And these comments
have even greater relevance to the next scene:

Dipsychus
O moon and stars forgive! And thou, clear
heaven,
Look pureness back into me. O great God,
Why, why in wisdom and in grace's name,
And in the name of saints and saintly
thoughts,
Of mothers, and of sisters, and chaste wives,
And angel woman-faces we have seen,
And angel woman-spirits we have guessed,
And innocent sweet children, and pure love,
Why did I ever one brief moment’s space
To this insidious lewdness lend chaste ears,
Or parley with this filthy Belial?

**Spirit**

Oh yes, you dream of sin and shame—
Trust me, it leaves one much the same.
’Tisn’t Elysium any more
Than what comes after or before:
But heavens! as innocent a thing
As picking strawberries in spring.
You think I’m anxious to allure you—
My object is much more to cure you.
I know it’s mainly your temptation
To think the thing a revelation,
A mystic mouthful that will give
Knowledge and death—none know and live!
I tell you plainly that it brings
Some ease; but the emptiness of things
(That one old sermon Earth still preaches
Until we practise what she teaches)
Is the sole lesson you’ll learn by it—
Still you undoubtedly should try it.
“Try all things”—bad and good, no matter;
You can’t till then hold fast the latter.
If not, this itch will stick and vex you
Your livelong days till death unsex you—
Hide in your bones, for aught I know,
And with you to the next world go.
Briefly—you cannot rest, I’m certain,
Until your band has drawn the curtain.
Once known the little lies behind it,
You’ll go your way and never mind it.
I’ll only cure is, never doubt it,
To do—and think no more about it.

**Dipsychus**

Could I believe that any child of Eve
Were formed and fashioned, raised and reared
for nought
But to be swilled with animal delight
And yield five minutes’ pleasure to the male—

**Spirit**

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
Betwixt the acres of the rye,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
These pretty country folk would lie—
In the spring time, the pretty spring time.
Dipsychus goes on to ponder in Galahad vein
his long-preserved virginity (“O Joseph and Don Quixote!”) and reaches his sage solution: “the matrimonial sanctities...the prattle of young children...the sanction of the law”; in short, the angel in the house. The Spirit is irritated but obliging:

Well, well—if you must stick perforce
Unto the ancient holy course,
And map your life out on the plan
Of the communal puritan,
For God’s sake carry out your creed,
Go home and marry—and be d—d.
I’ll help you.

**Dipsychus**

You!

**Spirit**

O never scout me;
I know you’ll never propose without me.

**Dipsychus**

I have talked o’ermuch. The Spirit passes
from me.

**Spirit**

You’d like another turn, I see.
Yes, yes, a little quiet turn.
By all means let us live and learn.
Here’s many a lady still waylaying,
And sundry gentlemen purveying.
And if ’twere only just to see
The room of an Italian fille,
’Twere worth the trouble and the money.
You’ll like to find—I found it funny—
The chamber où vous faites votre affaire
Stand nicely fitted up for prayer;
While dim you trace along one end
The Sacred Supper’s length extend.
The calm Madonna o'er your head
Smiles, col bambino, on the bed
Where—but your chaste ears I must spare—
Where, as we said, vous faites votre affaire.
They’ll suit you, these Venetian pets!
So natural, not the least coquettes—
Really at times one quite forgets—
Well, would you like perhaps to arrive at
A pretty creature’s home in private?
We can look in, just say goodnight,
And, if you like to stay, all right.
Just as you fancy—is it well?

**Dipsychus**

O folly, folly, folly! To the hotel!
The superbly comic finale, with Dipsychus’ panic shriek echoing pathetically, needs no underlining, but there are some perhaps no less obvious points that it will be convenient to emphasize. Here the conflict sets up certain opposites, the description of which varies according to the angle of vision. For Dipsychus there are on the one side: God, purity, wisdom, saintliness, innocence, angel women, mothers, sisters, chaste wives; on the other side: filthy Belial, insidious lewdness, sex as animal delight, mere physical self-gratification. For the Spirit, however, sexual activity is natural, sensible, “innocent”, unmysterious—simple country pleasure; and Dipsychus’ fussy turmoil is mystic and romantic rubbish.
The elevated and at times passionate idealism of Dipsychus finds its characteristic expression in a self-consciously “poetical” blank verse. In later longer soliloquies this verse, with its undeniably Elizabethan-poetic-drama flavouring, has an unpatterned, meandering movement, now slowly meditative as the speaker ponders, checks, hedge hesitates, now twisting more forcibly and in agitation as feeling intensifies, now breaking into flurries of exclamation and declamation. The Spirit, no prey to uncertainty or to “moonling”, generally finds a fit medium for his confident common sense in racy octosyllabic couplets, neatly and crisply patterned. His is the mode of Augustan light or social verse. He talks with verve and ease and wit. His tone is ironic, mocking, jeering.13

In these opening scenes the Spirit may seem clearly the stronger, the more persuasive from the reader’s standpoint. But then he has the initiative of the attacker, and he attacks too from an assured and firmly defined position. As the poem proceeds Dipsychus is allowed a lengthy and sympathetic hearing, and his scrupulous honesty and anguish of sincerity receive their due weight. The discomfited prig approaches intermittently the status of a Wrestling Jacob. He himself, at one point, dares to claim comparison with the shorn Samson. Such a comparison, however, is misleading. Dipsychus is no Samson: Agonistes. Milton’s Samson may display his weaknesses, doubts and despair but at the last he rises to “plain heroic magnitude of mind”, armed with celestial vigour. Dipsychus does not conquer; he submits. He quits himself like Dipsychus—unheroically, “twirling and twiddling ineffectively. And indeterminately swaying for ever”.

This lack of magnitude unfit’s Dipsychus for classical tragedy, but it fits him for a 19th-century ironic tragi-comedy. Goethe’s Faust may be representative of Mankind. Dipsychus is “you! hypocrite lector!—mon semblable,—mon frère!” He is the puzzled high-minded young man of the modern world, a Victorian Hamlet—or is it a Victorian Prufrock?14 He is not all young men; though perhaps most young men will at least have a blurred glimpse of his problems. He is a type of young man, one who has “something certainly of an over-educated weakness of purpose”; “there is a disposition to press too far the finer and subtler intellectual and moral susceptibilities”—“to stand still in transcendental doubt”. He carries to an extreme one way of reacting to the pressures of life. Yet we must perhaps remember that “individuals differ in character, capacity, and positions; and, according to their circumstances, will combine, in every possible variety of degree, the two elements of thoughtful discriminating selection and rejection, and frank and bold acceptance of what lies around them. Between the extremes of ascetic and timid self-culture, and of unquestioning, hesitating confidence, we may consent to see and tolerate every kind and gradation of intermixture”.15 Dipsychus represents one of these extremes; and there is the Spirit to represent the “frank and bold acceptance of what lies around” vs. Hamlet is in himself both extremes: he procrastinates and shilly-shally’s, and he stabs the rat behind the arras. But Clough places in debate the two separate voices, till in the end, by a process of sheer attrition, the timid self-culture sinks wearily to the wall. Hamlet can fight with blade, with bloody blameful blade, but Dipsychus is a protracted Cold War.

Of the opening of this Cold War I have given a sufficient sample, and to describe in detail its subsequent intricate and eddying skirmishings would be a lengthy and unnecessary labour—the poem is there to be read. It will be enough to state baldly that the debate throws up, among others, the following topics. There is first a discussion of the virtues or otherwise of “good society”: does it offer grace, decorum, loveliness, refinement? or does it crush “the green and vernal spontaneity, And waste the priceless moments of the man In regulating manner”? The Spirit’s comment on good society—

"Tis sad to what democracy is leading;
Give me your Eighteenth Century for high-breeding—
leads naturally to the next question, “Can we dare to enjoy ourselves in well-padded comfort when we know that others are slaving in misery and want?” “No,” says Dipsychus: “Why not?” says the Spirit:

Dipsychus
To make one’s fellow-man an instrument—

Spirit
Is just the thing that makes him most content.
Dipsychus is insulted by a “German brute”, but cannot be stirred by the Spirit to avenge his honour; which leads to a consideration not only of honour but of the pacifist position in general. There is a continual return to the religious problems with which the poem began: is Christ risen? can God really exist? Ironically the earnest Dipsychus is the doubter with “a strong Strauss-smell” about him, a rationalistic

Half-puritano-semiteheist
Cross of Neologist and Mystic,
as the Spirit contemptuously says; while the Spirit is an advocate of

Believe whatever things you can.
Take your religion as ‘twas found you,
And say no more of it—confound you!
And finally should be mentioned a question that

Westerly
Dipsychus dwells on at some length: whether his reluctance to act is not partly to be blamed on the modern world which is so debased, petty, commercialized, that there are no adequate outlets for great and aspiring souls.

The modern Hotspur
Shrills not his trumpet of "To Horse, To Horse!"
But consults columns in a railway guide;
A demigod of figures; an Achilles
Of computation. . . .

We ask Action,
And dream of arms and conflict; and string up
All self-devotion's muscles; and are set
To fold up papers—
as Clough was to tie up parcels for Florence Nightingale conducting heroic Action in the Crimea. This was a question, it will be remembered, near to the heart of another religious sceptic, George Eliot, who explicitly poses it on behalf of her Dorothea Brooke. Dorothea demands, like St. Theresa, an ardent epic life but her aspirations are "dispersed among hindrances". Modern life does not provide a medium in which to shape ardent deeds.

Dipsychus has many changing moods of resolution and dismay, and in the exploration of his "twisted thinking" he is possibly allowed too much rope—one may feel inclined to follow the example of "my uncle": "I won't say I didn't drop into a doze while the young man was drivelling through his later soliloquies." In the end he is driven to follow the Spirit's reiterated advice:
Submit, submit!
For tell me then, in earth's great laws
Have you found any saving clause,
Exemption special granted you
From doing what the rest must do?
Of Common Sense who made you quit,
And told you, you'd no need of it,
Nor to submit?
To move on angels' wings were sweet;
But who would therefore scorn his feet?
It cannot walk up to the sky;
It therefore will lie down and die.
Rich meats it don't obtain at call;
It therefore will not eat at all.
Poor babe, and yet a babe of wit!
But Common Sense? Not much of it,
Or 'twould submit.
Submit, submit!
As your good father did before you,
And as the mother who first bore you!
O yes! a child of heavenly birth!
But yet it was pupped too on earth.
Keep your new birth for that far day
When in the grave your bones you lay,
All with your kindred and connection,
In hopes of happy resurrection.
But how meantime to live is fit,
Ask Common Sense; and what says it?
Submit, submit!
'Tis Common Sense and human wit
Can find no higher name than it.
Submit! Submit!
O I am with you, my sweet friend,
Yea, always, even to the end.
Dipsychus bids farewell to the "pious sweet simplicities of life" and cries a tormented welcome to "the greedy flesh, the world, the Devil".

Mephistopheles, then, seems to have won the contest, though more through his opponent's gradual failure of nerve than by any great decisive action of his own. The two sides of the conflict are in fact felt to be fairly evenly balanced. It is not a simple struggle between good and evil, right and wrong, but something more complex, subtle, baffling, tangled. There is a radical ambiguity: who is right? which is good, which evil? The Epilogue describes the dilemma. After his acid comment on Dipsychus's soliloquies, "my uncle" continues:

"But there was a good deal that was unmeaning, vague, and involved; and what was most plain was least decent and least moral."

"Dear sir," said I, "says the proverb—"Needs must when the devil drives'; and if the devil is to speak—"

"Well," said my uncle, "why should he? Nobody asked him. Not that he didn't say much which, if only it hadn't been for the way he said it, and that it was he who said it, would have been sensible enough."

"But, sir," said I, "perhaps he wasn't a devil after all. That's the beauty of the poem; nobody can say. You see, dear sir, the thing which it is attempted to represent is the conflict between the tender conscience and the world. Now, the over-tender conscience will, of course, exaggerate the wickedness of the world. . . ."

"Perhaps he wasn't a devil after all": in fact, though there is something of Clough in Dipsychus, there is also much of him in the Spirit. The likeness between Dipsychus and his creator is obvious enough: one has only to read the Easter Day poem that Dipsychus quotes, or to follow "my uncle" tracing over-tender consciences back to Dr. Arnold—"he spoilt the public schools". But Clough and the devil? Henry Sidgwick, in his perceptive essay on Clough, says that in describing the struggle between the world and the ideal, "Clough does not decide the question; and though his sympathies are on the side of the ideal, we never know quite how far he would pronounce against the fiend." He goes on to point out that when in the first edition of the poems (1862) several of the Spirit's characteristic
songs were printed separately, "it was a little unfair to Clough (though less than might be expected) to publish his fiend's utterances as his own". I think one might put it more strongly than this. In his letters and prose remains Clough often offers devil's counsel: the Spirit frequently moves him. As one example (more could easily be given), consider this letter of advice to a friend (1852):

Enter the arena of your brethren, and go not to your grave without knowing what common merchants and solicitors, much more sailors and coalheavers, are acquainted with. Ignorance is a poor kind of innocence. The world is wiser than the wise, and as innocent as the innocent; and it has long been found out what is the best way of taking things . . . . the changes of position which women and students tremble and shilly-shally before, leave things much as they found them. . . . Let us not sit in a corner and moan, and think ourselves clever, for our comfort, while the room is full of dancing and cheerfulness. The sum of the whole matter is this: Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it without fiddling-faddling; for there is no experience, nor pleasure, nor pain, nor instruction, nor anything else in the grave whither thou goest. 18

I am not saying that Clough should be fully identified with Mephisto, whose views on the class question, for instance, are not Clough's own; but neither does Clough identify fully with Dipsychus, who displays none of the gusto, ironic wit, and assurance that animate the Spirit's utterance. Like Dipsychus Clough has a strong yearning for the ideal; like the Spirit he has a strong sense of everyday reality—"the positive and present". He uses the Faust myth to present this deep-seated psychological and moral conflict within him; and over it all he throws the tricky light of basic ambiguity—

The Devil oft the Holy Scripture uses,

But God can act the Devil when he chooses. In effect the conflict is as open as possible: Clough is no champion of Either/Or, and to exert the Will, to add up too soon, is the worst mistake. Even so, we may note that the Spirit, the voice of Society and Common Sense, emerges as a powerful and positive antagonist in this intestine drama—poetically no less than ethically.

Some light is thrown on Clough as a poet if we transpose the Dipsychus struggle into different terms. I suggest that essentially, if approximately, the oppositions are those between the "Augustan" virtues of the 18th century, and the "Romantic" values that reach full force in the 19th century. On the one hand (the Spirit), the down-to-earth, "civilized", social, sensible, witty; on the other (Dipsychus), the soaring, dreamy, yearning, lonely, introverted, solemn. Clough was reared in the religious tradition stemming from Wesley, with its "overexcitation of the religious sense", its "animal irritability of conscience", its anxious self-questionings. Like others of his generation 19 he came to view with approval and longing an acceptance of religion that was instinctive, traditional, unworried. Similarly he had been suckled on Wordsworth, but came to lean more and more towards 18th-century literature, especially such a poet as Crabbe. And perhaps poetically the devil does finally win: he is undoubtedly the livelier voice in Dipsychus. Towards the end of his life Clough began a series of tales on love and marriage that owed a good deal to Crabbe's tales. Like Crabbe he is happiest with the solid human scene: and these verse-stories (not only Mari Magno but The Bothie and Amours de Voyage) are his best and most entertaining work.

Too often in the past we have heard of Clough as the earnest doubter, the tired struggler with religious difficulties, Dr. Arnold's solemn disciple whose vital forces were sapped in the moral forcing-house of Rugby and paralysed at counter-Reformation Oxford. Not that there is no truth in this image of Clough. So Matthew Arnold presented him in Thyrsis, the image there, moreover, softened and prettified by the pastoral decoration, the diffused melancholy, the faintly patronizing pity. The image is sad, but it is much more sadly incomplete and misleading, as Arnold himself was aware. Clough is Dipsychus or Faustulus, involved so painfully, so intimately in the clashes and confusions of the religious and ethical life of Early-Victorian England; we cannot doubt that. Yet too Clough is Mephisto, the Spirit, the sardonic observer, the believer in a robust common sense, the conterminer of the wishy-washy, the poet with the novelist's eye. It is this Clough with his humour, humanity, and poetic vigour who deserves literary recognition. More than that: he deserves to be read.

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2. Life and Works of Goethe (Everyman Ed.), p. 469.
3. Dr. Arnold writes in a letter of 1819: "Don Juan has been with me for some weeks, but I am determined not to read it, for I was so annoyed by some specimens that I saw in glancing over the leaves, that I will not worry myself with any more of it." (Stevens' Life of Dr. Arnold, 1845, Vol. I. pp. 63.) Arnold's moral earnestness is well known, but his literary sympathies and intellectual interests were far wider than those of the Evangelist.
recollections. He could recommend Smollett to a pupil and enthuse over *Humphrey Clinker:*

"It is not too much to say that I have read it through fifty times." (Prothero's *Life of Dean Stanley*, Vol. I, p. 65.) He was, by the way, an admirer of Goethe and would have liked to introduce him into the Rugby curriculum (Stanley's *Life*, Vol. II, p. 71). It may be noted that while at Rugby Clough wrote some humorous verses in the manner and stanza of Frere's *The Monks and the the Giants* and of Byron's *Beppo* and *Don Juan* (S. Waddington, A. H. Clough, 1883).


The most complete version is to be found in *The Poems of A. H. Clough*, ed. Lowry et al., Oxford 1951.

In a letter dated November 18, 1849, Clough acknowledges with thanks a gift of "Goethe's works" from F. T. Palgrave. *Dipsychus* was written "during or soon after a journey to Venice in the autumn vacation, 1850" (Oxford Clough).

(8) Save in an after-Gospel and late Creed

He is not risen, indeed,

Christ is not risen.

--- *Easter Day.*

(9) Butler, *op. cit.* The phrase is used of Goethe's Mephistopheles.

(10) Dipsychus is fond of the symbolic Alps: lofty, stern, snow-covered ("pure"), towering above the world of men. No doubt Dr. Arnold sits on top. When W. D. Arnold first saw the Himalayas he was "reminded of Papy". (F. J. Woodward, *The Doctor's Disciples*, p. 203.)

(11) Cf. Maupassant, *La Maison Tellier*, end of Section II.

(12) Aimless and hopeless in my life I seem

To thread the winding byways of the town,

Bewildered, baffled, hurried hence and thence,

All at cross-purpose ever with myself. . .

This brief account of the verse-forms in *Dipsychus* does no justice to the variety of metres that both speakers use on occasion, but it is poetically true enough, as the Spirit recognises:

I too . . .

Could speak high sentiment as well as you,

And out-blank-verse you without much ado.

(14) No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

. . . .

Deferential, glad to be of use,

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;

At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—

Almost, at times, the Fool.

Clough's cast of mind was inescapably realist and ironic—and characteristically reduces the grandeur of myth to the "plain tale". See his comments at the beginning of *A Review of Some Modern Poets*: "Is it . . . so very great an exploit to wander out into the pleasant field of Greek or Latin mythology? . . . . The novelist does try to build us a real house to be lived in . . . and is more to our purpose than the student of ancient art who proposes to lodge us under an Ionic portico."

(15) These quotations are from Clough's *Review of Some Modern Poems*, 1853. He is turning to consider the poems of his friend Matthew Arnold.

(16) There is a curious, fragmentary sequel to *Dipsychus* called *Dipsychus Continued.* Dipsychus is thirty years older and Lord Chief Justice but still (very improbably, one feels, in the circumstances) agonizing over his actions and problems: in administering the law, he is doing the devil's work, not God's. A woman enters. She and Dipsychus, thirty years ago, lived together "in sin". He called her Pleasure, she says, but now her name is Guilt. This interview makes Dipsychus dangerously ill and he resigns his office. At this point the fragment ends. The situation it sketches is so odd and unconvincing that it can hardly be taken seriously. Clough seems to have intended retribution to come to Dipsychus for having submitted to the Devil, but the gesture is, I think, perfunctory. And such a sequel seems to nullify the deliberate ambiguities of *Dipsychus* itself. Clough was clearly attempting to redress the moral balance of the earlier poem, as he did elsewhere—cf. his two *Easter Day* poems.

(17) *Essays and Addresses*, 1904.


Richard Sadleir

The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney

"Every man is not only himself . . . men are lived over again; the world is now as it was in ages past."

So reads the epigraph to Book I of the trilogy The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney, and as we read we are confronted by the strength of a mind so deeply and comprehensively aware of life, at so many points, that it is impossible not to be thrilled, as a dream sometimes thrills one, by the feeling of actuality with which the imagination can cut to the nerves of a character, an emotion or a situation.

It is Henry Handel Richardson's penetration which enables her to display boldly and frankly so many sides of life in her characters; and which makes The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney a great novel; "big" not just in outline—its variety of physical settings, the range and diversity of its characters—but in the author's ability to explore finely the capacities and qualities of human being, through a knowledge and understanding of man in so many of his aspects: social liaisons, sexual and intimate relations, mystical artistic and spiritual impulses, all illuminated by a psychological penetration which serves the writer's creative purposes brilliantly.

So deep is her insight into the individual life that Richard Mahoney, while being one of the most sustained and full character studies in English literature, also reaches to some of the permanent and universal patterns of human life. The vicissitudes of Mahoney's life, the fortunes he throws away, the chances if security for himself and his family he frequently and deliberately gives up, his restless inability to live in one place and be satisfied, all these convince us in the end how far down in his own nature his tragedy lies and how little it depends on external circumstances. We are reminded, as we read, of Webster's lines about

"divers men who never yet expressed
Their strong desire of rest but by unrest,
By seeing of themselves."

All the incidents of Mahoney's life, which seems to a superficial glance so eventful, are really only variations on a single, underlying theme: he is incapable really of action; at the best everything he does is a reaction since, never having understood his own self, his deepest motives, he is "lived" by forces beyond his conscious knowledge and which often even contradict his rational self. He is like a man divided in two, or ridden by a ghost.

Mahoney is in many ways an impressive figure; a capable man, intelligent, educated, artistically sensitive, a skilful and dedicated doctor, an enquiring mind sincerely concerned with the scientific and religious thought of his day. Yet only in the final crisis is he placed in a position where he can see that every action of his, every thought, has never been finally more than the product of an obscure pride which is his nature, so that the fruit of every assertion of his will has been remorse. For example, early in the trilogy, Mahoney wins a law-case against a dishonest contractor, but his legal victory, already distasteful to him because he feels his lawyer is not a scrupulously honest man, turns, irrationally, into a sense of personal defeat and guilt when the lawyer's clerk tells him:

"I say Mr. Mahoney, a rare joke—gad it's enough to make you burst your sides! That old thingumob, the pl'intiff, ye know, now what'n earth d'you think 'e's been an' done? Gets outer court like one o'clock—'e'd a sorter rabbit fancy-in' business in 'is backyead. Well, 'ome 'e trots an' sits the guts of every blamed bunny, an' chucka the bloody corpses inter the street. Oh lor! What do you sry to that, eh Unfurnished in the upper story what? Heh, heh, heh!"

Mahoney is always a stranger, whether in England or Australia, as a shopkeeper on the goldfields or a rich man among the best Melbourne society, or a doctor with his patients; and this is because it is not his immediate environment which is most real to him, which is the directing power in his life, but it is that other world which each of us, unconsciously, both carries within himself and inhabits; those areas of ourselves which are not even in contact with the present moment or the outside world because they are made up out of our past lives, our most affecting experiences, our fears learnt from experience and our hopes for the future, all of which amount to another, purely subjective, mental environment which makes the world a very different place to every one of us.

In this way Richard Mahoney displays man's common, human capacity for creating on earth either his own hell or "transhuman paradise". He carries his humanity within him, as the Trojans bore their household gods, despite time and place. He is everyman.
THOUGH most discussions of Patrick White's Riders in the Chariot make some reference to the significance of the title they throw little light on its possible meanings and many readers still find it somewhat mystifying. The notes that follow are largely derived from Mircea Eliade's Myths, Dreams and Mysteries which the present writer happened to be reading when he first encountered Patrick White's novel and which he found singularly illuminating. They are suggestive only. Others will no doubt see the usefulness of Eliade's descriptions of the typical behaviour patterns of the shaman when trying to elucidate The Aunt's Story and, more particularly, Voss.

Basic to all of Eliade's contentions is his belief that all myths participate in the cosmological type of myth—that is, underlying all of them is the belief that in the Beginning (in illo tempore) gods and men mingled together; there was no distinction between Paradise and Earth, Earth was in fact Paradise; men knew nothing of sickness, ageing, and death; they understood the language of animals and lived at peace with them; they did no work at all, finding abundant food within reach; in short, they lived happily in a timeless perfect world. In some parts of the world, however, a distinction is made between Paradise and Heaven itself. In fact Paradise was in fact very close to Earth, or as very easy of access either by climbing a tree or a tropical creeper or ladder, or by scaling a mountain. As a result of some catastrophe, Man has fallen from this fabulously happy state of existence. He retains his nostalgia for it and makes persistent efforts to return, if only momentarily. These efforts to return manifest themselves most clearly in the ecstatic trances of certain specially gifted individuals. In the trance state they are held to enter into, or at any rate obtain glimpses of the paradisiacal condition of the mythic Ancestor before the catastrophe of the "fall". "... the most representative mystical experience of the archaic societies," says Eliade, "that of shamanism, betrays the Nostalgia for Paradise, the desire to recover the state of freedom and beatitude before the 'Fall', the will to restore communication between Earth and Heaven; in a word, to abolish all the changes made in the very structure of the Cosmos and in the human mode of being by that primordial disruption. The shaman's ecstasy restores a great deal of the paradisiac condition: it renews the friendship with the animals, by his flight or ascension, the shaman reconnects Earth with Heaven; up there, in Heaven, he once more meets the God of Heaven face to face and speaks directly to him as man sometimes did in illo tempore" (p. 66).

Amongst the other mediators of the sacred in archaic societies the shaman is distinguished as the specialist in ecstasy. Because he is able at will to pass out of his body and undertake mystical journeys through all the cosmic regions, he is a healer and a director of souls: like Hermes Psychopomp, he is a guide of souls to the abode of the dead as well as a visionary; he is a healer, it should be noted, because he alone can pursue the wandering soul of the sick person, capture it, and lead it back into the body it was desiring.

The ritualized procedures of the shaman usually include

(1) an appeal to the auxiliary spirits which more often than not are those of animals with whom the shaman converses in a secret language;
(2) drum-playing and dancing as a preparation for taking off on the mystic journey which leads to
(3) a state of trance, real or simulated, during which the shaman's soul is believed to have left his body.

In the first stage, the shaman imitates the behaviour of the animals, copying their cries, especially the cries of birds, as a stage on the way to recovering the bliss and spontaneity and one-ness with all creation that characterized man in his "unfallen" state. In the second, besides the ritual dancing and drum-playing, the shaman may make use of the other traditional aids, notably a notched tree or post representing the Tree of the World. The Cosmic Tree on top of which
sits the Lord of the World moves up through seven, or nine, or sometimes twelve levels or heavens. As the shaman reaches each notch or stage, he will pause to describe to his audience in endless detail all that he sees happening. Alternatively, as he plays upon his drum (which by the way has been fashioned from a branch of the Cosmic Tree) the shaman as he goes into a trance-state claims to be flying on it, approaching, and circling the Cosmic Tree.

Interesting parallels to these ritualized procedures of the shaman may be seen in the tales of the ancient fathers of Christian monasticism who are often shown in friendly relations with wild animals which they feed just like domestic pets, e.g., St. Francis or St. Jerome; and the shaman’s ascent into Paradise may recall St. Paul’s account in II Corinthians, XII: “I know a man in Christ who, fourteen years ago, was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which a man may not utter.”

A further parallelism is of interest in its application to Riders in the Chariot. In the Christian tradition Paradise has been rendered inaccessible through fire—its entrance being guarded by angels with flaming swords. A whole group of the techniques of the shaman is concerned with the mastery of fire. Whilst he is in his state of trance or ecstasy he is able to swallow live coals, touch red-hot iron and walk upon glowing coals. This capacity to endure the temperature of live coals is widely believed to demonstrate that the shaman has passed beyond the limits of the human condition and partakes of the nature and condition of spirits and like them to have the power to become invisible, to fly in the air, mounting up to Heaven and passing unharmed through its barriers of flame or descending into Hell and emerging from its fires unscathed.

Shamans seem to be found in all parts of the world—in the tropics as well as in the Polar regions. Everywhere it seems, one becomes a shaman (a) by spontaneous vocation—the “call” or “election”; (b) by carrying on a family tradition; and (c) by personal decision, or, less frequently, under pressure from the tribe or clan. Every shaman, whatever the method of selection, must undergo a prolonged course of instruction leading to an initiation ceremony which may be public, the course of instruction including experiences of an ecstatic nature (dreams, trances, visions) and the mastery of traditional procedures and rituals (the names and functions of spirits, the mythology and genealogy of the clan, the secret languages of birds and beasts, and so on). The future shaman marks himself off from ordinary folk (often enough in childhood or early youth) by progressively strange behaviour: he becomes a dreamer wandering off to woods and desert places where he has visions, goes into trances, or has fits during which he is incoherent and inarticulate. However, one may also become a shaman very much more suddenly and dramatically as a result of some unusual event or accident of traumatic intensity, e.g., amongst the Eskimos one shaman had been touched by lightning, another had spent five days in ice-cold water without, he claimed, wetting his clothes.

Many Nineteenth-century investigators were inclined to account for the behaviour of shamans in terms of epilepsy or of epilepsy combined with nervous instability intensified by living conditions of great severity—the excessive cold, the long nights, the desert solitudes, and the diet with too few vitamins of the Arctic, for instance. More recent investigators in Indonesia, the Amazon basin, and the Sudan on the other hand have testified to the superior intelligence, force of character, and self-command of shamans and have pointed out that shamans who may have begun by showing symptoms of illness or neurosis seem in the processes leading to initiation to have overcome their disabilities and to have won through to a new psychic integration.

Looking into the strange behaviour of the shaman-in-the-making, it would seem that the syndrome of his “illness” follows very closely the classic rituals of initiation. The sufferings of the “elect” are in every way similar to the tortures of initiation; just as the candidate was slain by the demons—“masters of the initiation”—so the future shaman sees himself being cut to pieces by “the demons of the illness”. The specific rites of shamanic initiation include a symbolic ascent to Heaven by means of a tree or post; the sick man “chosen” by the gods or the demons sees himself, in a dream or a series of dreams, travelling on his celestial way right to the foot of the Tree of the World. His ritual death, without which no initiation is possible, is experienced by “the patient” in the form of a descent into Hell. He is present, in a dream, at his own dismemberment, watching the demons cut off his head, tear out his eyes, and so on; and he frequently goes through long and elaborate exercises in contemplation surrounded by skeletons and bones. The whole process represents a total crisis which may lead to the disintegration of the personality, is in fact designed to that end. Within the context of archaic thinking, this induced “psychic chaos” is regarded as a replica of the “pre-cosmogonic chaos”, that amorphous and indescribable state which precedes all cosmogony. This symbolic return to chaos is indispensable to any new Creation. Hence, in order to arrive at a new
state of being in which one has the means to penetrate into other dimensions of reality one must dissolve and destroy the old, "profane" man as a stage on the way to a rebirth with a new sensibility specially sensitive to the "sacred".

To come now more specifically to chariots.

According to A. M. Hocart the kings of South-East Asia and Oceania were always carried shoulder-high because, taking rank with the gods, they must never touch the earth: like gods "they flew through the air". Similarly the apotheosis of a Roman Emperor included an ascension, thus conforming to a ritual pattern common throughout the Oriental world for thousands of years and exemplified again in images and mythical biographies of the divine Messenger, the Elect, and the Prophet.

In ascending to Heaven in a chariot, kings, emperors, and prophets transcend the human condition and become like the gods themselves, gods traditionally being represented either as seated on thrones or, if more mobile, travelling in chariots drawn by appropriate beasts, Venus drawn by doves, Juno by peacocks, Bacchus by leopards, and the God seen by Ezekiel by four living creatures full of eyes resembling eagle, ox, lion, and man. To this might be added the following from The Lost Language of Symbolism by Harold Bayley:

By the ancients the Sun was generally depicted as a charioteer driving a team of four horses. This immortal chariot of the Sun is in all probability the subject of the passage: "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it purple, the midst thereof being paved with love." This verse, like the rest of the poem, is a tissue of symbolism. The wood of Lebanon was a simile for incorruptibility, silver typified knowledge, gold was the symbol of wisdom, and purple—a combination of red and blue—presumably denoted a combination of the red of Love and the blue of Truth. The assertion that Solomon "made himself" a chariot, expresses the vital essence of mysticism, i.e., that man is his own fate and the maker and controller of his own destiny. It was a cardinal doctrine that the humblest individual might in time develop his spark of Personality into a spiritual Sun, and by his own efforts, charioteer-like, drive his soul into the innermost Halls of Heaven. "The righteous," says the writer of Matthew, "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Elisha is recorded to have had a vision of the mountain of the Lord filled with chariots and horses of fire. The writer of Psalm LVIII refers to the chariots of God being "twenty thousand, even thousands of angels", and the Indian mythologists conceived Indra and the Immortals driving their cars of light and lustre, which "gemed the sky like stars at night".

In Bonaventura's Life of St. Francis, there is narrated an incident which occurred, it is said, in Assisi. According to this account St. Francis was sleeping one night in a hut, and was "absent in the body from his sons". Suddenly at about midnight, while some of the brethren were taking rest and others keeping watch, "a chariot of fire of marvellous brightness, entering by the door of the house, turned thrice hither and thither through the dwelling, and over the chariot a shining ball of fire rested, in appearance like unto the Sun, making the night radiant." This phenomenon—an experience to which other mystics have testified was known as the "Vision of Adonai".

It is to be inferred that the poet who was responsible for The Song of Solomon had personally experienced this coveted "Vision of Adonai", and that he alludes to it in the passage, "I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded. Or ever I was aware my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib." The Song continues, "Return, return O Shulamite, return, return that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite?" The answer, "As it were the company of two armies", is extremely suggestive of the charioteer Host seen and recorded by Elisha: "It came to pass as they still went on and talked that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven. And Elisha cried, 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsesmen thereof!' And he saw him no more."

In the light of Eliade's studies Patrick White's four riders can best be described as shamans, untrained, uncertificated, unorthodox and unacknowledged, struggling in a world that has little or no place in it for seers, dreamers, visionaries, and mystics. Voss and Laura and the aunt in The Aunt's Story clearly belong to the same order of beings. It is White's great achievement as a novelist to render from within the life as perceived and endured by these "displaced" shamans. Just what we make of their approach to reality will depend a great deal upon our assessment of the nature and meaning of mystical experiences generally.

Orthodox Christians tend to look askance at seers and visionaries who operate independently of a Church. Enthusiasm and enthusiasts are suspect. Orthodox non-believers are even less welcoming—they tend to take refuge in explanations derived from medicine and psychiatry. Some readers, however, whilst puzzled, disturbed, and mystified find White impressive and may be glad to look into Eliade's book for the help it may give in grasping White's intentions.
To attempt a comprehensive review of the contemporary stage would be, I think, an enterprise beyond a resident of Western Australia. The text is, after all, only part of the whole play and it does not come alive until it is presented in its proper medium. We, here, are inevitably from one to four years behind the ordinary new plays and owing to the limited audiences available for such material much of the avant garde drama bypasses us completely. True, we can read the printed page but only a high degree of skill and imagination can clothe the bones of the playwright's ideas with the flesh of an emotional experience. To read, say, Behan's *The Hostage* is very different from being one of an audience responding to its varying moods.

With this limitation in mind I offer a kind of documentary on a year of the theatre in and around London—what was being shown, to whom and with what degree of appeal.

As what Eric Keown calls 'an unrepentant square' I find myself gravely out of sympathy with much of the avant garde drama and by this statement try to forestall the accusation of bias. I am biased. This sort of theatre seems to me undiverting as entertainment—unless we return to the merriment of watching a good hanging at Tyburn or poking the Bedlamites on Sundays—and nihilistic in thought. I would agree with Norman Marshall's contention that much of modern drama is utterly destructive and it is an interesting point to note that when a Sunday paper ran an Old Play versus New Play series they chose to oppose Noel Coward (poor old Noel who shocked the theatrical world with *The Vortex* in the days between the World Wars) with, not Wesker or Pinter, Beckett or Ionesco or Delaney, but Robert Bolt whose plays are intelligible in dialogue, architecturally pleasing and bear witness to some belief in compassion and the dignity of mankind. *A Man for all Seasons* was an immense success and is, I think, in the best sense of the word, a noble play. In Bolt's world the apes do not inherit the earth.

It is generally conceded that the great periods of dramatic output have occurred when the theatre's appeal was to the largest portion of the community—of course this may be reversing cause and effect—but whichever way we look at it we come back to the point that a coterie audience doesn't, as a rule, make for great and lasting drama. The Restoration theatre played to a limited audience—and still does. The less essentially 'Restoration' the play is, the larger the audience. And much the same thing can be said of avant garde drama today. In University theatres earnest players present it to a, presumably, University audience—and only the box office returns can indicate just how large (or, too often, how small) that audience can be. Surely, though, the ultimate test of a play is the range of its appeal and it is worth while to look at those plays which seemed to have the greatest attraction for the greatest number.

First and foremost, of course, there are the long runs—*My Fair Lady, Irma la Douce* and, inevitably, *The Mousetrap* with its 9-year record. Apart from mere fashion or force of habit ('My dear, we always go to see *The Mousetrap* on the first Wednesday of the month') what makes these plays so popular? The first two are musicals and the melodies help to carry them but there is more to it than that. The Shavian paradox—such as the awful fate of Alfred Doolittle who is forced into visible respectability—appeals just as much now as it did a generation ago; it provides the incongruous situation that always makes us laugh even in an atomic age, and the music and the spectacle are only adjuncts to the dialogue. The ending, noticeably, has been altered to give the 'popular' appeal and everyone should be happy. There is enough mental stimulus for the intelligentsia, a certain Cinderella quality for the less highbrow and it is pleasant to listen to and to watch. Of course it has indefinite runs. It is entertainment plus. And yet—and yet, there are a few who are faintly disconcerted at the jump from Shaw to the choruses. To them the marriage is not wholly satisfactory and they tend to think a little wistfully of another surprising union that came off rather better—Gilbert and Sullivan. *My Fair Lady* wear as well? they ask. But their small query is lost on the tumult of popular applause.

*Irma la Douce* has a different appeal. It is, frankly, a rather pornographic piece and how it got past the Lord Chamberlain I cannot tell, but
it is so delightfully presented with elements of comedy and fantasy intermingled that we can enjoy a lewd laugh without embarrassment and this is a great ease to the natural man who lives inside our more or less respectable habiliments. There is music here too and a happy—if highly improbable—ending and everyone goes home satisfied. Escapism? Well, why not?

About *The Mousetrap* one is completely at a loss. Why a thriller—and not nearly as good a thriller as, say, *Night Must Fall*—should go on and on one cannot say. And people go to see it again and again. I myself saw it twice and enjoyed it just as much the second time—after a 5-year interval—as I did the first. I fancy it must be a habit, like having eggs for breakfast. Certainly there seems nothing in the play itself to explain this phenomenon.

In the next category we have the revivals and it is interesting to note which of these were most popular. *Hamlet*, of course, has a perennial appeal that is not wholly snobbish. Apart from the ‘cultural’ audience, school-children and so forth, there is the vast body of people who go to see the play because they enjoy it. It is a wonderful action piece, something of a mystery, an experience of the sheer power and beauty of the English language and, of course, if you want that sort of thing, you can see Hamlet as the original Angry Young Man who speaks so much better than John Osborne’s heroes. Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi* too, was very successful and here one cannot help making the comparison between the material and attitudes of Jacobean drama and those of today. There is the same inclination towards the perverse and the unnatural. Incest, homosexuality and sadism combine with such ordinary items as murder, madness and adultery in both sets of plays, although *The Duchess* and the very fine revival of Middleton’s *The Changeling* present these much more powerfully by reason of their poetic qualities. I cannot, however, recall in the Jacobean playwrights anything quite like the cannibalism of Tennessee Williams’ *Suddenly Last Summer* or the zestful coprophilia of Wesker’s *Roots* or Beckett’s *Endgame*. Confronted with this last, one appreciates the cheerful and vulgar jests of *Bartholomew Fair* for their matter of factness.

Other highly successful revivals were Ibsen’s *Lady from the Sea*, which left one wondering why the playwright was ever called ‘the Father of Realism’, Synge’s *Playboy* done with a strong stylised life—quite incomprehensible but lovely sounds, and *Dr. Faustus* which, as ever, whether read or seen, appeared as fragments only of a colossal edifice. Neither the magnificent and brooding Lucifer suitably lit by the red fires of hell, nor any amount of brilliant stage tricks with the Pope’s dinner and at the Emperor’s court could hide the fact that the middle of the play is woefully thin. The audience response was rather like that at a good conjuring trick and the perpetual presence of the Good and Evil Angels aloft in niches each side of the proscenium caused some unease until the whisper went about from the inevitable informed person in the back stalls that they were wearing safety belts. But the mighty fragments caught the attention by the sheer magnificence of the verse and the tremendous close of the play left one exhausted but queerly exalted. Faustus and his damnation in the vision of nearly 400 years ago is much more impressive than the 1961 vision of Luther and his anal devils.

And so, by John Osborne as a transition, to the new plays of the year.

These fall roughly into two groups—those who present their material in a more or less traditional form (that is, with something in the way of plot, coherent dialogue, forward movement and so on) and those whose authors invent new forms for themselves. The ideas and attitudes of the playwrights may, of course, be presented in either way.

Of the first group I suppose the most successful plays of the year were Rattigan’s *Ross*, Bolt’s *The Tiger and The Horse* and *A Man for All Seasons*, Whiting’s *The Devils* and *The Miracle Worker*.

Of the plays mentioned, it is interesting to note that three are semi-biographical in something of the heroic tradition. *Ross* is based on the life of Lawrence of Arabia, *A Man for All Seasons* on that of Sir Thomas More and *The Miracle Worker* on that of Helen Keller. Here, then, is the modern version of the drama about the almost legendary King or Warrior, these figures are the Lear and the Macbeths of the 20th Century. Notice that each of the figures has become something of a myth, each in a different way, and the playwright’s battle is half won already because we bring to the protagonist in each drama our own imaginative response from reading and hearsay. I am not in any way denying the skills of the playwrights concerned but I do suggest that, even in the world of the ‘little men’—the Willie Lomans—we still respond to the larger than life figure—though our scales of measurement may be different from those of the Elizabethans. And in each case one was left with the feeling that human kind is not contemptible, that the world is not wholly without hope. The body may fail, be humiliated or broken but there is spirit as well as body and it is triumphant over evil whether that evil be stupidity, political expediency or physical dis-
ability. Each of these plays was an exciting and satisfying experience.

The Devils presents that rather difficult art form—a play adapted from a book—in this case Huxley's The Devils of Meu don—and the result tended to be rather episodic in structure. In thought we came back again to something of the dark world of Jacobean drama. Devil possession or sexual obsession dominate the play and one is left wondering rather cynically which is which. The priest is a close relative of the worldly Cardinals of Webster and the message seems rather confused—in presentation at least. Is a completely full life only obtained by tasting all human experiences good and evil or is this a self-deception? The ending is, frankly, horrible—sadistic and humiliating—but the play holds the attention by terror if not by pity.

This same cynicism pervades much of the contemporary theatre. Luther, another biography, pulls down the possibly heroic figure to a neurotic who is troubled by his father and his bowels; the most dramatic appeal lies in Tetzel the purveyor of indulgences and the play proves that Osborne can write monologues but not dialogue. In a comic setting the same bitterness pervades Anouilh's The Rehearsal whose theme is the corruption of innocence. In The Lion in Love Shelagh Delaney produces a sort of second exercise on A Taste of Honey—frustration and squallid despair, but the later play seems to me even more hopeless than the earlier . . . . same setting, same characters, more gloom.

Among the playwrights dear to the hearts of the coterie audience that haunts the Royal Court (the theatre of Granville Barker) we find the names of Beckett, Wesker, Pinter, Simpson, Osborne and Sartre. Some of the plays graduate to the West End and become popular fare, others have mysterious 'revivals' at irregular intervals, between whiles disappearing into the provinces to spread culture and, for the most part, gloom. The dramatic techniques vary oddly. Wesker, for instance, in his first play The Kitchen presented an entirely plotless documentary about a day in the kitchen of a large restaurant. Vaguely discernible among a covey of scurrying scullions was some illicit love affair between one of the cooks and one of the waitresses, some one was (inevitably) pregnant but the detail was lost in the polyglot dialogue and the clatter of dishes. The only impression one carried away was a grim determination to eat at home in future. But the later play Roots, though it cannot resist the lure to deal with defaecation on stage, has a plot and some genuine people and, at the end, the heroine, disillusioned and heartbroken, suddenly finds her triumph. She can, at last, think for herself. This play is a welcome change from the nihilism of most of this group of dramatists. Sartre's Altona contained the usual picture of the breakdown of an illusion spiced with suggestions of sadism, madness and incest. Pinter, I am assured by Those Who Understand is highly entertaining but I found The Birthday Party completely incomprehensible and rather depressing while The Care-taker, moved to the West End and billed as 'the funniest play in London', raised hardly a smile on the night I was present. A cheerful parasite like Jonson's Mosca is perhaps revoltiong but at the same time enjoyable for his very zest. Pinter's whining tramp lacked this zest and, combined with a feeable minded youth who Saw Something Nasty in the Woodshed, made the play rather a painful experience.

One could go on indefinitely listing these hopeless, destructive and infinitely bitter plays but to what purpose? It is obvious that they are a reflection of the great world-wide unease that finds other expressions in delinquency, violence, and interest in sexual aberrations and the 'beat' generation as a whole. But it must be remembered that these plays appeal, for the most part, to a minority audience unless they happen to be put over by some superb acting as happened to The Entertainer with Olivier and George Relph. In as much as most of them are destructive they seem to have no future. Whether, on the ruins of their world a new drama will arise none can foretell, nor how far the general public will take them to its heart. On the whole, audiences seem to prefer the revivals of a less unquiet age or the humanity of Robert Bolt, but a later generation may view the mid-twentieth century as we view Restoration comedy—interesting but quite remote.

One phenomenon, to conclude, is worth a notice all by itself—the extraordinary revue Beyond the Fringe. Here four young men, with the utmost good humour and the blandest cynicism, take the world apart. Nothing escapes their devastating criticism—Church, State, Society, Communism, the railway system . . . . all come under fire. Nothing and no one is spared and the revue is utterly destructive. But audiences love it and one has to fight tooth and nail for a seat. One laughs so heartily at everyone else's foibles that one can endure the laughter at one's own and it is only afterwards that one realises how completely the established order has been blown sky high. There is a wonderful satire on Macmillan—but an equally uproarious one on the earnest Socialist. There is a sermon that is completely deflated by the last two words—and clergymen send their curates along to learn sermon techniques. The authors started a restaurant called The Establishment as a sort of appendix to their show which is one sustained satire on
the Establishment—and who are now its most eager patrons? The Establishment!

Just why this revue should have such appeal when it would seem to be the essence of all the nihilist drama of the year is hard to tell. Perhaps it appeals to the innate cruelty which enables us to laugh at the misfortunes of others, thankful that they are not ours. Perhaps it is witty in a period when heavy suffering is more common than wit. Perhaps it has the tremendous zest that we get in the great satirical comedies of—say—Ben Jonson. Whatever it has, Beyond the Fringe is at once the complete presentation of the Nihilist theatre of '61 and its complete justification. We laugh, and as long as we can laugh, however wryly, there is hope.

Trevor Jones

Music And The University

Variations On An Enigmatic Theme

WITH the possible exception of politics and religion, it is doubtful if there is any other field of human endeavour about which so much nonsense and uninformed comment is heard as the art of music. Music is considered "fair game" for anyone, and it is not surprising, though disturbing to those concerned, to find that of all disciplines embraced by the modern university, the position of music in tertiary education is the least understood, the most misinterpreted, and the most often criticised. Misconceptions about the aims and methods of a university music department are found in all quarters, both inside the universities among staff as well as students, and outside from conductors and broadcasting officials to performers and ordinary "music-lovers". Much of the blame for this situation lies with music departments themselves, for the ideas which they now take for granted are in reality very new and differ greatly from those held when most of today's musicians were trained. As someone who, being professionally involved in university music and therefore frequently called upon to answer such questions and criticisms, usually finds himself unable to reply coherently on the spur of the moment, the writer gratefully takes this opportunity to express his views on the nature and importance of the university's task in the musical world. It is stressed that, although most of these views have considerable currency in many places today and are, in fact, being applied in varying degrees in some of the leading university music departments both in Australia and abroad, they are here put forward as the writer's own personal opinions and are not intended to reflect upon the practice of any particular institution. Since the misapprehensions to be referred to are, in all probability, world-wide, it is felt that it will be more valuable to consider the problem in a general way than merely to attempt a survey of what applies in particular cases. If the resulting discussion appears somewhat abstract and theoretical as a consequence of this approach, it has the advantage that the writer will be untrammelled by any considerations other than intrinsic values as he sees them, without being subject to any charges of direct or implicit criticism of any specific status quo.

Perhaps the best introduction to the problem is to examine the criticisms which, in the writer's experience, are most frequently levelled at university music departments. These resolve themselves primarily into complaints at several "shortages" in a community: a shortage of performers, of composers, of teachers, and of informed critics. Secondly, most misconceptions are based on faulty definitions of several key terms: "music", "theory", "academic", "musicologist", "conservatorium" and "Bachelor of Music". The answers to the "shortage" charges will, it is hoped, emerge in the course of this discussion, but the correct definition of these much-abused words must be attempted here and now.

"Music", for most people, means "performance", usually piano playing, instead of a living
and creative art; to “learn music”, far from being merely the acquiring of muscular and mental control over a machine for purely executant purposes, is to study one of the major arts of man and to gain a humanising and sensitising experience without equal. “Theory” is held to comprise all those dull, pedantic accessories such as harmony, counterpoint, form, and history, often inadvertently referred to collectively by conservatorium students as “the frills”, and which, like medicines, are to be tolerated only because they are considered “good for one” and are forgotten as soon as possible after the dose has been administered. The true importance of the so-called “theoretical studies”, so long obscured by uninspired and unconvincing teaching, lies in their being the essential part of any living art, closely and indissolubly linked with the creative experience itself. Surely it is extraordinary that the “theory” of music, far from being a sterile pursuit, alone leads to the only thoroughly creative aspect of music, composition, whereas the apparently much more vital and fertile studies in performance lead only to re-creation at best or mechanical reproduction at worst.

Closely identified in the popular mind with “theory” is the word “academic”, which usually denotes a remote, stultifying dissection of an art that can only be apprehended instinctively, as it were, and in blissful ignorance of its structure and mechanics. If the application of intellect and scholarship to music destroys rather than enhances one’s emotional responses, the fault lies either in the methods employed by the teacher or in the quality of perception in the student, not in the process itself. The monster who applies “academic” reasoning and analysis to “theory” of music is none other than that most denounced of men, the “musicologist”, one who knows all about music but can neither create nor perform it. That this kind of picture of musicology has gained such popularity is due largely to the unfortunate emergence of men whose only claim to musical ability lies in their knowing how to read musical notation, historians and antiquarians who might just as well have applied their patient scholarship to Egyptology or Old Norse poetry. The true musicologist is, of course, a person possessed of the deepest and broadest understanding of music in all its aspects, who is frequently a gifted composer and performer as well as an expert scholar, and above all a man of culture who sees his subject in its correct perspective in human affairs.

As for the common idea of a “conservatorium”, this is held to be the pinnacle of musical educational institutions, a place to which a university music department runs a very poor second and which it should aspire to become, where the real business of musical education, namely the learning to sing or play an instrument, takes place. Misinterpreting the truism that “composers are born and not made”, many people would consider that only harm could come to a young would-be composer by submitting to rigorous technical disciplines, and so they would not even admit composition as a worthwhile province of a conservatorium. That it should supply a well-grounded course in basic musicianship and integrated studies in music as an art to be enjoyed as well as being just a feeder of hungry orchestras and a supplier of a meal-ticket to hosts of budding “professional musicians” rarely occurs to the majority.

Lastly, in this sad catalogue of misconstrued terms, “Bachelor of Music”, with its implied reliance on a “Faculty of Music” in a university, connotes for most people the true aim of anyone idealistic (or rash) enough to wish to pursue musical studies at tertiary level. To attempt to explain that the central and most appropriate place for music in a university is in the Faculty of Arts, and that a specialist degree in music is only a subsidiary and peripheral aspect of university studies in music, reserved for the few with marked abilities in composition and ideally a post-graduate degree to be taken after an Arts degree that includes music—this is to try to preach heresy to a confirmed and devout believer in the sacrosanct and unworldly religion of Music as a thing apart from life and mundane reality. (If it is felt that the foregoing statements are deliberately perverse, or that these popular misconceptions have been overstated, the writer avers that the latter conform strictly to his own recurring experiences and that the former will be clarified and justified in the following exposition of what, in his view, the appropriate functions of Conservatorium and University are in the musical activities of a community.) From this “clearing of the air” by an attempt to re-define some basic terminology, the gist of the writer’s argument may already be apparent.

On the surface, a conservatorium of music consists of a number of practical teachers of various instruments and of singing. If it were no more than this, any community graced with able private teachers would have, in effect, a “conservatorium”, but its essential characteristic is the co-operation and integration of these teachers in a coherent group, offering not only a well-balanced course of instruction in musicianship to individuals, whether for amateur or professional realisation, but opportunities for corporate musical activities in choirs, orchestras, chamber-music ensembles and operatic “workshop” productions, as well as conducting tuition and experience for
those who desire it. It should develop some degree of keyboard ability and the playing of an orchestral instrument in all students, whatever their basic study, and provide elementary background studies in the "language", structure and development of music. In short, though it is concerned primarily with the performance of music, it should aim to produce musicians first and foremost, and not just "players" or "singers".

A university music department, on the other hand, is concerned with music as an art as well as a craft, as a humanity, a literature and a science. It does not aim to produce professional musicians or to train students primarily for any particular musical career, but to add a deep understanding of music to a student's education in the liberal arts. Just as a University English department's courses in drama are not designed primarily to produce professional actors, but leave this task to "institutes of dramatic art", so a music department's responsibilities do not include the training of professional performers. A further analogy, however, may illustrate the fact that a performer may benefit from a university musical education: a technician who has gained his diploma at a technical college may be compared with a conservatorium-trained performer, as against the professional engineer with a university degree and a musician similarly qualified. The objection in this analogy to the fact that the graduate in engineering is nonetheless trained vocationally but the Arts graduate with a Music major is not, introduces the second (and secondary) function of a university music department: the training of professional musicians towards a Bachelor of Music. Whether for composers, with the emphasis on a full understanding of traditional technique as well as adequate grounding in contemporary methods, or for fully-trained performers, the core of studies for the B.Mus. should be the same as for the B.A. Thus both the above analogies apply in different ways to a music department: the Arts graduate in music compares with the English Drama major, and the Bachelor of Music with the engineering graduate, and both are quite distinct from the conservatorium diploma holder, as are the products of an acting school or a technical college. The provision of Honours Schools at the Bachelor level and of the higher degrees of M.A. and Ph.D. after the B.A. and the M.Mus. and D.Mus after the B.Mus. have of course a similar connotation to those in other disciplines.

Although the university music department's concern is with scholarship and the conservatorium's with musicianship, it is vital that something of each be represented in the other. Just as the expert performer needs the penetration and understanding of styles that scholarly and analytic studies can impart, so the scholar needs first-hand experience with actual music-making through choral activity and, where possible, chamber-ensemble and orchestral participation. Further, both are equally concerned with the acquiring of such basic musical skills as efficient score-reading and accurate aural perception. It is therefore obvious that the ideal situation is one where the conservatorium and music department operate in close collaboration and co-operation with each other, while each clearly preserves its own distinctive character and raison d'être.

The university has an additional role to fulfil through the performance of music that would otherwise not be heard. This field includes contemporary and "avant garde" music, neglected masterpieces of the 18th and 19th centuries, and all music written before about 1750, whose performance requires detailed scholarly knowledge of instruments and styles of performance no longer used. Consideration of "box-office appeal" plays no part in such a task, but meticulous attention to accurate and authentic performance, backed up by all the resources of musicology, should be preserved always. An ancillary function to such performances of otherwise unknown works is the active promotion of concerts of these categories of music by professional performers.

It is, perhaps, appropriate to refer back at this moment to the already-mentioned choral activity in universities. Of necessity, choral singing is the mainstay of student music-making in a university, and it should be the task of a music department to organise and maintain a large choir composed primarily of students from any and every faculty as well as its own students. While a valuable liaison between the university and the community can be achieved by admitting outsiders to such a choir, it must exist, first and foremost, for students past and present. From the main choir can be drawn specialist groups for the study and performance of smaller-scale works, but in all cases it is the study of the music through coming to grips with it in rehearsal that is important from an educational point of view; the limiting of repertoire, either in difficulty or extent, in order to achieve a semi-professional standard of performance is thus surely unjustifiable. The same criteria should apply to student orchestras in a university.

At first sight, instruction in composition would appear to occupy a middle ground between conservatorium and university, and it certainly should be available to students of either institution to some extent. When one considers, however, that ideally a composer should be the most highly and broadly trained of all musicians, it is the university's responsibility to employ first-class practising composers who are good teachers,
and to encourage prospective composers to study for a Bachelor of Music. Compositions by staff-members of a music department could justifiably and legitimately be regarded as highly as research, for both are to a large extent “creative”, though this does not of course imply that research is not an important pursuit in music departments. Scholarly research in all the many aspects of musicology should, indeed, be just as much expected of staff-members in music departments as in any other field in a university.

What, then, should be the aims and ideals of a university music department? It should, like any university discipline, encourage independent and critical thought of the highest scholarly standards, and strive to produce leaders of musical taste, opinion and culture in the community. It should, without neglecting the essential “live” experience of actual music-making and creating, develop “professional listeners” rather than amateur performers. It should aim at widening and deepening people’s awareness of music as an enriching and ennobling part of life, not as a mere escape or soporific that exists “in a vacuum” or apart from the rest of human activity.

The scope of this view of music and the size of the task before its professors is truly enormous. It has to do with all countries, all races and all languages, of all times and in all places, in all forms and for all media, embracing the church and the theatre as well as the home, the salon and the concert-hall, and concerning itself with the technique of creating as well as with the understanding of music. One wonders what other field of study covers anything like so wide a range. It reaches out to touch more than a dozen other recognised areas of university study: languages and literature in all its forms, social, political, cultural and economic history, classics, philosophy, comparative religion and theology, psychology, anthropology and sociology, architecture and the fine arts, educational theory, acoustics, mathematics and electronics. Small wonder that much of this is treated superficially and with some diffidence, for what scholar can hope to master more than a modicum of such disparate fields in one lifetime! Nevertheless, students should at least be made aware of the vast scope and range of music’s ramifications, and encouraged to investigate as many of them as possible. In an age of ever-increasing specialisation inside and outside universities, few areas of knowledge can offer so many and varied opportunities for inter-disciplinary communication², and only such a co-operation between scholars of different leanings can hope to implement so comprehensive a scheme of musical instruction as is here envisaged. The ideal music department could thus occupy a central position in a university, and provide for all scholars and students a common meeting-ground of ideas. Such a Utopian concept cannot be realised at present, but it is one towards which an ideal university should not fear to work, especially since, of all traits, an interest in music seems to be the commonest delight among university scholars in all fields.

There are many fields for expansion, both in research and teaching. Ethnomusicological studies in “primitive”, Oriental and folk music are becoming recognised as more than a specialist research field, and their application to general musical education at all levels is an inviting possibility³. Electronic music, so rich in creative possibilities beyond the purely experimental stage, is an apt field for university investigation, requiring as it does much technical knowledge in addition to musical training. New methods, principles and aids in musical education, as well as the reshaping of content of much that now barely passes as “planned courses”, urgently require codification and promulgation at the tertiary level. Psychological aspects of music and the controlled therapeutic uses of music have barely been touched as yet. A sound basis of musical aesthetics and critical criteria need to be established with authority. The thorough exploration of the history of musical instruments and the collecting, reconstructing and re-learning of the myriad instruments of the past is a most compelling and rewarding task. The science of acoustics, both pure and applied (through the design of halls and instruments and through compositional practice) needs to be taken much more seriously as a firm foundation for musical studies of all kinds. The reconsideration of harmonic and formal analysis and its application as a necessary tool for worthwhile criticism requires a new and iconoclastic approach by the best minds. Lastly, though this may be considered somewhat beyond the framework of true university studies as enunciated above, there is a need for a kind of dramatic and fine arts centre, where creative artists and scholars of all kinds could work together in all forms of theatrical production from drama, opera and ballet to the film, television and radio; where else can this be done but at a university?

All the above areas for expansion have already received some attention in isolated cases, but the field is virtually wide open for a purposeful attack on these and other tasks by the universities. However much we prize the idea of knowledge for its own sake, the needs of the modern community increasingly demand that serious thought be given to some of these problems and the results made available in organised courses for those who will apply themselves in these fields in the future.
Three special aspects of musical education that are often assumed to be the province of universities should here be mentioned very briefly: public examination bodies in the field of practical performance (such as the A.M.E.B. in Australia), teachers' training colleges, and adult education and extension boards. Of these, the first is entirely outside the true range of university responsibility, belonging to the conservatoia, except insofar as such examinations are directly related to the matriculation requirements in music of a university. The second is also the province of others, namely education departments, but there is much to be said for close co-operation and proximity between university, conservatorium and training college in musical matters, and the universities should exercise much more control over the content of courses and the standards of instruction at colleges than they frequently do at present. The vitally important work of adult education and extra-mural or extension courses is, however, essentially a university matter, and music departments should be closely concerned and identified with their work of raising standards of culture and awareness in the community.

The answers to those who charge the universities with failing to remedy the shortages mentioned at the beginning of this discussion will now be obvious. The shortage of performers is not in any sense the universities' responsibility, but that of the conservatoia, but the universities can and should provide us with better musicians than the conservatoia themselves can achieve alone; the lack of composers of quality is at least partly due to their failure to avail themselves of a full university training in music, and to the scarcity of first-class practising composers as teachers in the universities; to produce more and better music-teachers for the schools is the task of training colleges, but the universities need to raise the standards of instruction given in these colleges by producing more highly-trained instructors for them; the shortage of informed critics is wholly a matter for university concern, and the development of professional critics and private musical devotees of real discernment and educated taste can only take place in such a music department of an Arts Faculty as has been suggested in this article and is now emerging here and abroad.

In conclusion, it must regretfully be admitted that comparatively few universities today hold such a wide view of music, and that even fewer (if any) carry out more than a small part of such a programme of musical activity. If, however, university music departments expect to gain a sympathetic hearing from Universities Commissions and similar fund-disposing bodies, as well as a position of unreserved respect from their sister disciplines, they will need to show that music, far from being a dubious or peripheral part of a university's function, is capable of being interpreted as an innate and essential aspect of top-level scholarship and teaching. Indeed, we may well claim that, in the ultimate analysis, music's future, like that of every worthwhile endeavour, lies in the hands of the universities.


3. For a discussion of this by the writer, see ""The Ethnomusicologist's Role in Music Education"" in "The Music Educators Journal" (U.S.), December, 1962.
Julius Kovesi

The Alienated Big Animal

To be a Marxist is no longer as fashionable as it used to be. I say as it used to be, for we meet a new type of Marxist nowadays who appears terribly fashionable. He is a Marxist, not a Communist; his interests are cultural, not political; he is a humanist, not a terrorist. Far from accepting Party discipline he is its latest critic and far from accepting responsibility for the deeds that have discredited the Parties all over the world he takes up an attitude of "I told you so"—even though he did nothing of the kind. He never quotes the Capital or the Manifesto, but—and this is what is so fashionable—he refers to "Marx's earlier writings". It is not the esoteric air that surrounds the phrase "Marx's earlier writings" (for wouldn't we be impressed by anyone who distinguishes between a man's earlier and later writings) that has created a renewed respectability for an otherwise bankrupt theory. What creates excitement is the claim that a theory of alienation is to be found in these writings. To talk about the concept of alienation immediately brings one up to date, for this is one of the central themes of existentialism.

The reason for this change is manifold. In Eastern Europe one has to find a doctrinal basis for any opposition to Party doctrinaires, so that to turn up some unusual pages of Marx acts as a fresh breeze of free thought there. But in more normal societies where you don't have to refer to Marx in order to be able to raise your voice the reason for the change is different. For a long time Marxists were able to disregard the practical test of their theory as evidence against its validity by invoking a thoroughly unmarxist maxim: "this is all right in theory; only it went wrong in practice." This maxim is unmarxist because for Marx there is no other test but practice for the validity of a theory. But whether Marxist or not this is a stupid thing to say. It is like saying "this house plan is excellent, except that one cannot live in a house built like that". But by now even the theory holds much respect in its orthodox presentation. Hence the need for a new maxim: instead of saying "it is all right in theory only in practice it went wrong", one has to say "the theory used to be all right, only later, in the hands of certain Marxists and Leninists it went wrong". One has to add to this that the criticism of our society today is conducted in the cultural and not in the political field (incidentally, this is why one should rather discuss this matter in a literary than in a political journal) and this is another reason why neo-marxists prefer to talk in terms of alienation and not in terms of class-struggles. Reading the pages of the English Universities and Left Review or the French Arguments one could be excused if one gained the impression that the dialectical progress of class-struggles had already come to an end and that the romance of dialectic was continuing now in the cultural field. But all this is oversimplified. One cannot account for the views of such French post-Stalinists as Lucien Goldmann or Edgar Morin in these terms without taking into account the influence on them of present-day French thought.

There is this change of interest even among those who are not committed to marxism but are its critics or scholars. One searches in vain for Marx's views on alienation in the standard texts of up to quite recent years. Even in a work which was intended to cover the early developments of Marx, Sidney Hook's From Hegel to Marx, there is not a single reference or mention of alienation. One of the most recent critical works, however, Robert C. Tucker's Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, was originally intended to be published under the title The Alienated World of Karl Marx, while on the Continent, two-thirds of Père Jean-Yves Calvez's monumental work La Pensée de Karl Marx is devoted to the concept of alienation.

While the orthodox expositions of Marx's thought emphasised his break with Hegel and the idealist tradition and consequently left many puzzling elements in that thought unexplained, this new emphasis, by connecting Marx more closely with Hegel helps in resolving these puzzles. To take just one crucial example. It has always been an embarrassing question not only in our classrooms but also for my well-trained Marxist teachers in Hungary, why the dialectical progress of history comes to an end with communist society; and closely connected to this is the question why each successive stage in the dialectical development is a better one, culminating in an absolutely good society, for how can the description of a factual historical process, supposedly purely scientific, be used as an evaluative and even moral measuring rod? But of course, talk about dialectical contradictions makes sense only in the world of thought, and this is why, whether it is true or false, Hegelian dialectic at least
makes sense. The development of history is Thought’s efforts to regain its own self by eliminating all contradictions stage by stage from within itself. (Economic conditions by themselves cannot be self contradictory without reference to our conceptions about them compared to what they ought to be, and contradictions can be a driving-force in this field only because we want to avoid them.) But if it is Thought that develops through the stage of history, and if moreover the progress of Thought is to regain its own Self, its own essential nature, then naturally, this process consists of Thought progressively eliminating all contradictions from itself, eliminating all that is not its Self. This mystical Entity contains its own driving-force by wanting to regain its own Self (like a Grand Ventriloquist using our human thoughts and institutions as puppets on the stage of history) and once all self contradictions have been eliminated then there is no more reason why Thought should change: we have arrived at the truly rational. History is the history of the alienated Self towards regaining its essential nature. Whether it is true or false, without these Hegelian notions the dialectical process does not even make sense and this is why the rediscovery of Marx’s notions on alienation supplies a vital link for our understanding of Marx.

All the left-Hegelians inherited the problem of the alienated Self from Hegel, indeed they regarded the solution of this problem as their principal task, and what divided them were the different solutions they found to this problem. The goal of Man is to regain his own essential nature, for then Man will be free. The condition in which Man is not free is the condition in which he is divided, where part of his Self is presented as an “object” as “not-Self”, and this alien element imposes as restriction on him. To regain freedom is to regain one’s own self. For Feuerbach alienation took the form of religion where man projected the best part of himself into a transcendent Being, alienated this part of himself and worshipped it as a “Thou”. To regain one’s self and one’s freedom is to repossess this divine element, to dethrone God and worship Man—the best conscious formulation of our original sin. Bruno Bauer saw our alienation in terms of our unconscious motives and assumptions which take on an objective impersonal life of their own and impose their oppressive limitations on us. The solution for him lies in critical philosophy: by criticising all our assumptions and accepted modes of behaviour we regain our freedom and repossess our rational nature.

In the hands of Marx alienation took yet another form. Part of one’s life-activity became objec-
we look at the city instead of looking at the individual. He said that if we find the very same thing written in large letters let us read it there instead of straining our eyes over the small letters. Here is a classic example of turning something which makes very good sense when applied to an individual, into something disastrous when applied to the Large Animal, the City conceived as an individual writ large. For it makes very good sense to say that in our individual lives our reason should control our spirit and our inclinations. When there is a conflict between my inclinations and what my reason tells me, the resolution of this conflict cannot be anyone else's job but my own; it is my own effort that brings the conflict to a solution. And when I follow my reason I follow my own decision. But now let us see all this writ large. Society is divided into Reason, Spirit and Inclination. Reason is represented by the Philosopher-King, Spirit by the Guardians and the rest is us. Or let me be so impertinent as to assume that I, with a few of my collaborators will be the Philosopher-King. Now I am not divided into reason and inclination any more, nor are you as an individual. I, the whole of me is Reason, whatever I say is the expression of the City's Reason, and whatever you say is the expression of what you represent, the City's Inclination. The conflict between reason and inclination will be a conflict between you and me, and you remember we agreed that reason should control inclinations, for only then are we moral, happy and free. The more you disagree with me the more you prove that your reason is not in order, and the more I force you to follow me the more you become what you ought to be, your true self. Or again, we may say that the Kantian ethics concerned with individual human beings makes excellent sense: we have many inclinations, formulated in various maxims, and when we come to decide on which of these maxims we should act we should ask which of these maxims could be made a universal law. A maxim which cannot be turned into a universal law that all human beings should follow expresses only a particular wish of my own. To act morally is to act on universalisable maxims. But let us see what consequences this type of theory could have when again it is applied to a Large Animal—not by Kant himself but by Rousseau before him. He creates a new organic Entity by his Social Contract. As he puts it: "Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole." Now this indivisible whole should be governed by the General Will. But should we go out to the street and ask anyone what the General Will is? How would they know? He will express only what he wants. "In fact," Rousseau says, "each individual, as a man, may have a particular will contrary or dissimilar to the general will which he has as a citizen." (This is how 90% of the population can be the "enemy of people"). We see here the split personality again: your will as an individual and your will as a citizen. But all this is discussed in terms of Society, for the General Will is not my or your Will, it is the will of Society. Out of the various wills only those should be acted on that can be made universal, the General Will, but this decision is not mine or yours; we have to call in Society's Reason and the selection will not be made out of my own maxims, for all my maxims as an individual are only particular maxims but all the maxims of the one who knows the General Will (and again, we should need a Philosopher-King for this) are universal. To be compelled to follow this will is simply to be compelled to follow my real will as a citizen. To deny my will as an individual is simply to eliminate what is not the will of my real self. This is again the Hegelian way to freedom. As Rousseau says: "Whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free."

Similarly, the notion of alienation is a fruitful, useful and penetrating conceptual tool in analysing and talking about individual human beings. But in the case of Marx it is essentially wedded to talking about a fictitious Big Animal, Society.

The notion of alienation had a long history before Hegel but to us it came mainly from him through many channels. I have mentioned only some of the forms it took in the hands of the left-Hegelians. Even what we have from them assumed many new and divers forms—as Martin Buber's I-Thou language is one example of Feuerbach's influence. Through Kierkegaard and from Hegel himself it reached the existentialists, while again German sociology made extensive use of the notion, as we can see from Mannheim and Weber. These and many others worked out the notion of alienation into a useful and penetrating tool. What value this notion has is due to them and one cannot read their achievements back into Marx. For as soon as Marx got hold of the notion he turned it into a strange kind of political economy, describing the split personality of a Big Animal in the terms of the classical economists. I cannot therefore agree with those who claim by reference to Marx's early writings on the concept of alienation that his theory started all right but went wrong in the course of time.
One cannot say that he had a good theory of alienation but a bad political economy because his theory of alienation is his political economy and it is bad precisely because its foundation is the Hegelian notion of alienation. As we have seen, the value of emphasising these early writings of Marx is that it enables us to see what makes his dialectic and class-struggle click. His theory of alienation will not make him up to date but reveals only the Hegelian foundations of his economics.

We can also see now an additional reason for saying that it is not the case that Marxist theory is all right, but that in the hands of Leninists and Stalinists it went wrong. It is an essential feature of political theories that do not talk about individuals but about a Big Animal that they call for a Philosopher-King or for a group of them, who represent the Reason of the Big Animal. The Leninist Party, which is the most conscious element of the proletariat expressing the voice of History, is Marxism and not its misuse. For Marx has nothing at all to say on how we should organise our society, what sort of institutions we should have and how we conduct our lives by and through those institutions. Consequently no political practice can be a misuse of these nonexisting recommendations. What he has given us is a metaphysical justification for a Party to identify their egos with the demiurge of History and then left it at that. Speculations about good political institutions he called “utopian socialism”. His were scientific and his science amounts to this: Once Society regains its Self all our problems are solved and there is no need to think about how to conduct our affairs.

Karl Popper claims that dialectical materialism is not a scientific theory because you cannot test it, there is no possible crucial experiment that could either verify or falsify it. Consequently it does not even tell us anything informative either. This is an impressive and illuminating criticism. But to say this of a theory which is designed to be put into practice and which accepts only practice as the test of its validity this criticism is not damning enough. There has been an experiment and it is still going on. Someone might say that it is not yet a crucial experiment. One could indeed go on experimenting with inanimate objects waiting for a crucial experiment after large quantities of those objects have been destroyed. But even if we were experimenting with mice this sort of talk could be irresponsible. As it is, when we put Hegel’s theory of alienation dressed in economic terms to a test on human beings one should say that even one experiment was crucial. If someone even after such a crucial experiment still tries to justify the ways of Marx to men by reference to his earlier writings he only makes himself more pathetic.

(1) The case of the perhaps only original Marxist philosopher in a communist country, that of George Lukacs is quite different. Except when he had to recant his views to the Communist Academy in 1934 he has always understood Marx in a way that the recent developments can only vindicate him. He was able to do this because he came to Marx not through such exegetes as Kautsky, Plekhanov or Lenin but through the more Hegelian tradition of the German sociologists especially through Simmel and Weber who drew his attention to the problem of alienation. This enabled him to understand Marx better than the members of the Communist Academy to whom he had to confess his deviations.


(3) Marx’s terminology is confusing. The translation of the English edition of Marx’s Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts gives a salutary but short warning on the differences between the words Entwüsselfen and Entfernen, both of which are used by Marx in talking about alienation. Marx doesn’t even treat the problem of alienation for its own merit and so he never distinguishes between the many widely different problems associated with it: The psychological state when you lost the feeling of belonging either to your society or to your work, the sociological state when you are treated as an object rather than a subject, the existentialist moral sense of living in “bad faith”, the metaphysical notion of part of your essential self turning into something external etc., to mention only some of the major variations on the theme.

Though Marxist philosophers never treated the subject seriously it is significant that whenever they refer to existentialists they do so in the same spirit as when they refer to other deviationists or revisionists. It is significant because it indicates that they feel the family-resemblance between themselves and others who talk about alienation. Cf. for instance the summary of an article from Voprosy Literatury in the July-September 1959 number of Soviet Survey. The article ends with the standard marxist philosophical argument used against revisionists: “The vicissitudes of the existentialist novel shows us perhaps particularly clearly that in political life and in literature also a third path, between the path of reaction and progress, is impossible.”
Writers on Australian history give us a neat and convincing description of how the Chinese community was established and developed in the country. The facts are arranged into a pattern that can be recited by any schoolboy who has studied the subject. There was a discovery of gold; an influx of Chinese followed, directed to the diggings, and then later on to urban areas; trouble developed on the fields and later in the towns; and then as a result of this barriers were put up to protect Australia from cheap labour, and from what was held to be an unassimilable minority. The pieces all fit together very snugly. The trouble is, when we think about the matter, the account does not tell us very much about the Chinese in Australia. In fact an analytical appraisal of written works reveals that two separate themes have been treated and as often as not unconsciously united into one. There is the history of the Chinese community living in contact with the Australian; and there is the history of the Australians’ idea of the Chinese; and these two subjects are not the same. Writing that has been done centres on the latter in particular. Consequently we have got to know a lot more about what Australians think about Chinese, than about the immigrant group itself.

The historian who sets himself to make a thorough search of local as well as national records, and who undertakes a survey of the Chinese community, does not see the same fitted pattern of cause and effect that has been shaped by others. The Chinese who came here were not at first, or all, involved in the gold rush. It is significant that the Chinese have two terms for Australia—the pictographic phrase, the New Gold Mountain, talked about in the southern provinces, and the phonetic transcription of our word Australia. Not all of the immigrants had the gold island in mind when they come. In fact, in the decade before the influx commenced there were Chinese existing as communities in the eastern colonies, and these made contributions in the contact of cultures different from those made on the goldfields.

This does not mean that the period of gold discoveries is to be regarded as unimportant. It is significant and will remain so for the historian who writes about the Chinese here, for two reasons in particular. The rush brought a substantial increase in the number of Chinese migrants, and a change in the nature of their community; and also there developed from that time firm attitudes towards the Chinese, indicating that Australian-held stereotypes had their origins in the gold camps. However, more comprehensive treatment allows us to see the period of influx in perspective, as one stage in a development that spanned a long period of time; and to realize that events of the more exciting ‘gold period’ have persistently attracted attention at the expense of other less newsworthy but significant happenings. The writer who seeks to understand the role of the Chinese in Australia must start his researches before gold.

The systematic introduction of Chinese as contract workers in the pastoral industry in Australia commenced in the mid eighteen-forties. Ever since 1837, when the Committee on Immigration in New South Wales discussed the labour problem, the importing of ‘coolie’ labour had been mooted. Little was done at first, and by August 1840 the situation was so acute that the Sydney Morning Herald reported in its columns:

“The demand for labour is so great at present only two courses are open; stop breeding and cultivating, or import coolies . . .” (28/8/1840).

Attempts to get workers from India and Chile failed, so despite the tense international situation caused by the Opium War, employers turned to China.

Records on recruitment at that period do not exist in plenty. The scheme was a private one, organized by flock-owners in the colony aided by local ship-owners such as Towns, and these people have not left full accounts of their activities. The official records are also scrappy. The colonial government took no part whatsoever in the move. The scheme was never blessed officially and its promoters received no encouragement. Governor Gipps and the authorities in England in fact set the course of official attitude by declaring themselves against the flock-owners. Mr. Mother Country, Stephen, put the case admirably in a note to Lord Stanley on 12th September, 1843 (C.O. 201/333) when he said that the govern-
ment had to look after the interests of the working people as well as others. Nevertheless, in spite of lack of support, a smooth working organization for importing Chinese coolies grew. In 1843 an association of employers was formed to exploit the labour trade, and contacts were made in treaty ports being newly opened in China. This machinery so established was later to play a part in directing the influx of Chinese to Australia.

Recruitment was done in the south part of China. The Chinese were signed up on the spot by the pastoralist or his delegate, given an advance of wages and shipped to a port on the east coast of Australia. There they were collected by the contractor and taken to the station concerned, where they were employed as shepherds.

Shepherding was not the most attractive occupation to be followed at the time, or indeed at any time. It takes a great imaginative process to load it with bucolic delights. The life was a monotonous one, especially on the larger runs, and was not likely to attract the bright-minded and adventurous soul. However the Chinese who came were not the usual sort of person we have come to associate with the word "coolie". These people were recruited in the years before the cheap labour trade got under way in China, and were no doubt of better quality.

The employers who contracted them felt that these had the qualities needed for the job. They were viewed as being industrious, as having a sense of responsibility and as being sufficiently intelligent to learn the trade. However, they were not successful as shepherds. In general they did not settle peaceably on the runs nor remain contented contract workers. This was not necessarily because they came from south China and were unfamiliar with extensive farming techniques. Some managed to adapt themselves to the conditions and won approval from employers. Other factors caused the failures, as a series of incidents that took place in Chinese-staffed runs indicates. Two events in particular show that these labourers were not the docile cheap labourers pictured by certain employers, and later gold-diggers.

One incident took place at Flyer's Creek, a station on the headwaters of the Lachlan. At the end of November 1852, a Chinese shepherd whose name is recorded as Taw Taw fought with a shearer. The European won the bout, but the affair did not stop there. Taw Taw sent out messages asking the local Chinese to assemble at the station. They came just before the weekend and assembled on a hill about three hundred yards from the shearing shed. There they arranged themselves in military formation, each being armed with a pole to the end of which had been fixed a sheep-shear blade: looking rather like the pike used by local militias in Ch'ing dynasty China. The shearers and other Europeans drew themselves up in line opposite, but at that stage the police arrived and negotiations between the two groups and the station owner were successful and the matter ended.

There is no certainty as to what were the real grievances that led to the incident. They are not recorded in this case, but it seems that more was involved than dignitly lost in a fight with a 'white barbarian'. The affray at Canning Downs, a station on the Darling Downs, is more revealing. There the Chinese were dissatisfied with their contracts and the working conditions and gathered in the same manner, armed with sheep-shears and arrayed in military formation. They captured the vegetable shed, made demands, but were routed by Europeans who called in the services of an armed local aboriginal.

A survey of such records of the Chinese in the pastoral industry indicates to the historian that the Chinese were not willing cheap labourers. They were conscious of their conditions, and like any human beings acted to better themselves, and objected to being 'done' in a contract. Local figures in China had emerged in history to lead people in much the same directions, and it is not surprising to find similar protest being made in Australia. These have not formed a subject of study. Instead there has been a tendency to concentrate on Chinese as low-wage workers. This has come about as the result of an accident of history as much as anything else. The Chinese came in great numbers, and became more noticeable in Australia at the time the coolie trade was being established, and when Darwin and Gobineau were stimulating ideas on the hierarchical pattern of races. In this atmosphere, the persisting stereotype of Chinese workers took shape. It is up to the historian to review this mythical figure, and see the part Chinese played in the history of labour, at least in the pastoral history, even if this means upsetting some well-established theories.
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